AN EVALUATION GUIDE
FOR WOMEN'S GROUPS

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INTRODUCTION

This guide is based on the premise that evaluation is a useful activity.

Evaluation can assist an organization or group to develop and maintain perspective on its work. An evaluation process can be an opportunity for participants in a group or project to stand back from day-to-day demands and activities and see more clearly what work is actually being done and why. It can help in building an understanding of whether or how goals have changed; what factors inside and outside the group's control have affected the work; what is going well and where changes need to be made; and, it can provide valuable information for planning future work.

Women's organizations—for whom this guide is intended primarily—stand to benefit greatly from participating in evaluation. If the evaluation methods employed reflect women's groups' needs, interests and circumstances, evaluation can assist a group in putting its work in perspective. Given the pressure on so many women's groups to react—to respond to initiatives of government at all levels, to quixotic public interest in women's issues, and most important to respond to women's needs and concerns—keeping perspective on our work is a difficult task.

Evaluation can also be a way of making visible the work that we actually do as a group and as individuals in a group. Like much of women's work in the home, the ongoing work of a women's group often goes unrecognized and unrewarded. Many time-consuming tasks can easily be taken for granted in the press of daily demands for service and action. And women's groups can get caught up in the quest for "results" or "outcomes," just as funders so often seem to.

Evaluation can serve to make a group's work visible and provide a way to analyse and acknowledge the work.

However, evaluation is generally considered to be an unpleasant process. It *is* a process of making judgments, but that is something we all do everyday. The difficulty is that the term "evaluation" implies criticism and a "them" and "us" situation. Evaluation has traditionally been a process in which someone, often a funding agency or its agent, stands apart from a group and passes judgment on its success or failure.

Also, the terminology associated with evaluation can sound like an alien language (see *Appendix 14* for definitions of some terms commonly used in talking about evaluation methods). Continuing debates about such things as subjective versus objective approaches, qualitative versus quantitative data, process or formative versus summative or outcome evaluation can justifiably increase groups' reluctance to consider the potential benefits of evaluation. And a preoccupation with evaluation terminology can divert attention from the simple questions which are central to evaluation: who, when, what, how, and why.

In addition, women's groups have been understandably skeptical about the degree to which evaluation methods would take into account the innovative structures and alternative approaches to services women's groups have developed; the difficulties of working with very limited funding and resources; and the social change orientation most women's groups have.

Further, it is clear that government funders and other agencies providing money for women's issues and groups are looking to evaluation as a means of holding groups accountable and/or justifying their own funding decisions. Increasingly, there is pressure on women's groups to undertake evaluation or to agree to being evaluated. With government cutbacks in services and funding programs in the name of economic restraint, evaluation of the

"cost-effectiveness" of a group's work is becoming one of the strings attached to funding. In the absence of wide acceptance of evaluation methods that are appropriate for women's groups, the prospect of greater demand for evaluation by government and other institutions is a frightening prospect.

This is not paranoia; these are valid concerns. However, we've learned in our work at the Women's Research Centre that a solid and rigorous evaluation method does *not* have to be—indeed it *should* not be—frightening, confusing, or a "them and us" process.

The Women's Research Centre has had extensive experience with evaluation. We include self-evaluation as a regular feature of our own work and we've found that it helps us to identify trouble spots and ways to improve our work. It also helps us to keep on track with what we set out to accomplish both in a specific project and as an organization.

In addition, the Women's Research Centre has worked with several women's groups from Newfoundland to the Yukon in sorting out evaluation questions and in designing ways of doing evaluation which actually reflect the particular realities of women's organizations. We've also been consulted by government departments seeking to evaluate their own programs and/or programs they've funded.

We decided to undertake this guide not because we have all the answers to the many evaluation problems we've encountered, nor because we've found a magic or foolproof formula. Rather, we know that evaluation has been useful to us in our work and we have learned some things from working with other women's groups and with government departments which we think can be useful to groups who are considering or facing an evaluation.

In Part I of this guide we describe an approach to evaluation. This approach, which we call participant focussed evaluation, has worked for us and other women's groups. We outline some rules and guidelines for doing evaluation that serve both women's groups and funders and, most important, that help to protect the interests of women's groups. In Part II we describe a self-evaluation process and how to carry it out.

The guide we present is meant to be just that: a guide, *not* a blueprint. Each group's situation is different and funders' requirements may vary. Therefore, women's groups (and funders or evaluators also) may have to adapt the guidelines and examples we suggest to fit their own situations. What we present are the basic points, and an approach that will make it possible for women's groups to face evaluation with more knowledge, more confidence, and with a better chance of being respected participants in the evaluation process.

PART I: PARTICIPANT FOCUSSED EVALUATION

In this part we first describe what participant focussed evaluation is. We then discuss the importance of *preparing for evaluation* and the practical steps involved in the preparation phase. Next we outline a negotiation process groups and funders can use to arrive at an evaluation method which will not only meet their concerns but which will also be manageable in terms of the group's resources.

The subsequent sections deal with the actual design of the evaluation, how to collect and analyse evaluation data, and report on evaluation findings.

Several appendixes clarify what goals and objectives are and provide examples of data collection instruments and ways of analysing data.

WHAT IS PARTICIPANT FOCUSSED EVALUATION?

Participant focussed evaluation is based on the following principles:

1 *Evaluation can and should be useful to the group doing the work that is evaluated.* It should help the group to identify how and why it is effective and how and why its work can be improved. In addition, evaluation can provide information to increase a group's understanding of the issues and methods involved in its work. The documentation and analysis developed through evaluation of a group's work can also be helpful both to other groups doing similar or related work and to funders.

2 Since the interests and perspective of the participants in the work being evaluated shape and influence the work, and because the participants are obviously the experts on their own work, *to be useful evaluation must make the participants' interests and perspective central to the evaluation.* In practice this means that the group's goals and objectives—what the group itself set out to do and intends to accomplish—must be standards against which the group's work is judged.("Participants" means those people directly involved in designing the work and carrying it out as well as those the work is meant to serve or influence or educate, etc.)

3 *An evaluation process must operate according to rules and guidelines which will ensure that the evaluation is not self-serving and does not gloss over any problems or difficulties in the work.* The aim is to do a rigorous, constructive assessment the group can use in its own planning and strategy development and in making any necessary internal changes.

From these principles it follows that the evaluation process must include *feedback mechanisms for participants in the work to make use of the information the evaluation collects* during the evaluation process and not just at the end of the process. These mechanisms can take the form of review meetings between group members and those involved in the evaluation, regular written reports on evaluation findings, etc. Ideally, evaluation should be built into a group's work from the start and the information from the evaluation should be shared throughout the process.

In addition, *participant focussed evaluation assumes success.* Starting with participants' interests and aims means recognizing that a group comes together to succeed in accomplishing particular goals and objectives. It does not intend or set out to fail. Similarly, we assume that a funder does not fund a group's work with the aim of wasting money or because it intends the group to fail. Therefore, the central question of an evaluation is not a matter of success or failure; rather the emphasis is on degrees of success, on why and how well the group succeeded in doing what it set out to do and where and why it fell short and can improve. It is a positive, constructive approach rather than a negative one.

Furthermore, in relation to women's organizations, starting with participants' perspective means that *recognition of the social change orientation of most women's groups' work* is built into the evaluation. It means recognizing that most women's groups are non-profit organizations engaged not in the business of producing or selling products but in the political and educational work of improving the status of women, changing legislation, educating the public and/or professionals, and providing services to women—battered women, rape victims, and so on. Women's groups' projects and work are aimed at describing problem situations as they exist and seeking ways to improve them; they are focussed on problem-solving, on filling gaps in information and/or services; they promote change.

It is understandably hard to measure social change—to determine whether, when, how, and why change has occurred and what effects any one specific action or project has had. Therefore, an

evaluation approach which looks simply at results will not be particularly appropriate or useful. Instead, the focus and emphasis in evaluating social change efforts should be on the process of the work and the strategies employed.

This requires an evaluation approach which will provide a description of what the work actually is, what it involves, the context in which the work is done, and how well it is progressing. The approach must take into account the innovative structures social change groups have devised, such as collectives rather than a hierarchical structure, for example. The participant focussed approach to evaluation we present in this guide is tailored to the social change work most women's groups do.

While the perspective of those doing and directing the work is central to participant focussed evaluation, it is necessary to obtain information and assessment from "outside" the group, from those the group aims to reach, serve or influence. In many cases, the women delivering service or working to bring about change share the interests and sometimes the problems of the women they seek to reach or serve. Participant focussed evaluation makes it possible to *recognize such shared interests* rather than disregarding or denying them. It is also necessary to collect information on how the group's work affects and is perceived by other organizations and individuals and participant focussed evaluation provides ways of doing this too.

Participant focussed evaluation emphasizes the collection of descriptive, subjective information. However, numerical or statistical data which is obtained by counting the numbers of workshop participants, or the number of briefs written or letters sent and so on, is also an important part of the evaluation.

Finally, participant focussed evaluation, like other methods of evaluation, is essentially a process of making an assessment. To ensure that the assessment is both fair and credible, evaluation must operate in a systematic way; *information must be collected and analysed according to certain rules and standards and not in a haphazard or ad-hoc fashion.*

Evaluation requires making *judgments*—i.e. "estimating or forming an opinion based on data" (Oxford Dictionary definition). This requires collecting the information or data necessary to make an estimate. Obtaining the information can involve interviews, record keeping, questionnaires, journals and log books to record day-by-day work, or any combination of these. The questions posed in information gathering and data collection can be well-defined (with a checklist of possible answers) or open-ended (i.e. without guidelines for answers and allowing for whatever responses informants choose to give). The data can be numerical or descriptive or both.

One of the rules of participant focussed evaluation is that decisions about what information will be collected to form a judgment must be made *not* in the abstract but in relation to the overall framework or standard for the work being evaluated. In participant focussed evaluation the standard or framework is what the group itself set out to accomplish, its goals and objectives. For example, if the group has said its purpose in doing a workshop is "to provide participants with an overview of the effects of the workplace environment on women's health," then the *judgment* to be made is how well the workshop fulfilled that purpose, according to feedback from workshop participants, workshop organizers, etc.

The process of judgment also involves measurement—which means estimating according to some standard. Essentially it is a process of taking a "reading" of a specific situation at one point in time (let's call it Time A) and comparing that to information on the situation at a later date (Time B, for example). Time A could be the beginning of a lecture series or a workshop and Time B could be the end of the series or workshop. Or, Time A could simply be an agreed upon date, such as the beginning of the group's fiscal year or the beginning of work on a particular project or issue; and Time B could be a point three months or six months, for example, into the work.

Participant focussed evaluation requires that the group whose work is being evaluated has the authority to decide what the appropriate time period will be for measuring what has happened to the work. If the funder or evaluator insists on setting the time period, then at the very least, the group must have the right to discuss and negotiate the decision according to the group's own perspective on the work being evaluated.

The group also has the authority to decide, or to participate in decisions about, the questions that will be asked and the information that will be collected to measure what has happened to the work in a given time period. And the standard for measure-

ment will be the group's own goals and objectives for the work in that time period.

Part of the process of making judgments can be *comparison*, looking for the similarities and differences among the various aspects of the group's work. To make comparisons, however, requires that the same kind of information has been collected on the aspects of work that are to be compared and that the aspects are sufficiently similar. For example, if a group is running a series of educational workshops, a standard form for feedback from workshop participants should be used for all workshops in the series to ensure that comparisons can be made between similar kinds of work based on the same kind of information . (How rules and standards which ensure a systematic, fair and credible evaluation works in practice is described and illustrated in the section titled *Developing the evaluation design)*

In summary, participant focussed evaluation starts with the perspective and interests of the participants in a group's work as the basis for designing an evaluation which allows the group to assess how well it is meeting its goals and objectives. Participant focussed evaluation recognizes the knowledge and expertise of those who direct and do the work and those who are the users or targets of the work. It encourages maximum input from the group itself and recognizes and deals with the political action and social change orientation common to most women's groups (and other community groups).

Participant focussed evaluation, in facilitating the description and documentation of a group's work, provides an opportunity for a group to increase its own and outsiders' understanding of issues and process and of why (as well as what) parts of its work are going well or are problematic. This kind of understanding makes it possible for a group to more readily repeat its successes and correct or avoid repeating problems and difficulties. Participant focussed evaluation is a constructive, respectful and rigorous approach to evaluation that can yield practical information for a group's strategy development and planning.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR EVALUATION

Steps in preparing for evaluation

1 Decide what work will be evaluated.

2 Determine who from the group will be involved in the evaluation. Why and how will they be involved?

3 Identify what the group wants to learn about its work. What are the key questions you want the evaluation to address?

4 Look at ways your group already collects information about its work and keeps track of the work it's doing. Will the information you collect or record enable you to answer the questions you have about how your group's work is going? Is there additional information you need to answer those questions? How can you collect that information?

5 Summarize what you've decided so far. Include any questions or concerns you have.

6 Decide whether you need outside help from a consultant experienced in evaluation or data collection, etc. Clarify what kind of help you want, what questions you want to ask a consultant.

7 Estimate what the cost of evaluation may be.

8 Identify possible uses of the evaluation results.

9 Revise the summary of decisions your group has made to include costs, uses of evaluation results and any advice you've received from a consultant.

Preparation is a crucial part of *any* evaluation process, whether the evaluation is to use the participant focussed approach or some other method. By following the guidelines we outline for the preparation phase, the groups whose work is being evaluated will be in a stronger, more assertive position throughout any evaluation process.

The aim of the preparation phase is clarification. Our assumption is that the clearer a group can be about its own work and about what its own concerns are regarding the evaluation, the greater the chances for the group to make the evaluation a useful and positive process.

Whether a group takes the initiative on its own to evaluate its work or undertakes evaluation in response to a funder's requirements, it is essential that the group prepare itself for the evaluation by clarifying what the focus and scope of the evaluation should be—from its own point of view.

There are five questions to consider in preparing for evaluation:

- What work will be evaluated?
- Who should be involved in the evaluation?
- What does the group itself want to learn from the evaluation?;
- How can evaluation data be collected to meet the group's evaluation needs?
- What is needed to proceed with the evaluation process?

Consideration of these questions will be influenced by whether the initiative for evaluation came from the group itself or from a funder. For example, the funder of a particular project or piece of work may require evaluation of only that project; the group, however, may consider the specific project to be integral or connected to other aspects of its work and decide that the evaluation should assess the specific project in context rather than in isolation. The preparation phase is an opportunity for the group to clarify what work it wants to have evaluated and, thus, to clarify what concerns it will raise with the funder in negotiating the terms of the evaluation. The preparation phase is designed to ensure the group can develop its own perspective on its work before entering into such negotiations or before beginning its own evaluation process.

What work will be evaluated?

The first step is to review what the group actually does. Include all aspects of the work and all the specific projects. The group can begin with a rather quick listing of its work and then proceed to listing the specific tasks involved in each part of the work. For example, a group may do lobbying, public education, and/or provide a specific service (such as a transition house for battered women or a rape crisis centre). Included in each of these kinds of work are additional pieces of work such as writing briefs, preparing educational resource materials, liaison with other groups/agencies, fund-raising, advocacy, and so on. The tasks required to accomplish one kind of work—such as information gathering, referral, staffing a crisis line, organizing meetings, etc.— may also contribute to accomplishing other projects or pieces of work.

It's important to pay attention both to what's actually involved in doing a specific kind of work and how different pieces of work are connected with each other. For example, in a rape crisis centre, the crisis calls the group deals with may have led to a specific project to develop educational materials to help rape victims understand better how the criminal justice system works. This may in turn require that some Centre workers (paid or unpaid) liaise with people in the criminal justice system to clarify policy and procedures and also do fund-raising to pay for publishing the materials. Similarly, different aspects of the work of groups focussed on lobbying or on public education interconnect: a presentation or meeting on one issue can often influence other projects or lead to work on other issues. And, of course, for groups whose overall operation (i.e. all its work) is being evaluated, clarity about what the operation actually consists of is essential.

By reviewing its work, the various projects it's involved in and the tasks each requires, the group will have a picture of its work and be able to identify what pieces of work are essentially discrete (and could, therefore, be evaluated separately) and what aspects of work are dependent on or tied to each other (and, therefore, would more likely need to be evaluated together).

Key questions to consider:

- What work does the group actually do? Be specific.
- What tasks are involved in doing the work? Include everything from answering the phone to counselling to arranging meetings to writing briefs or pamphlets to information gathering, etc.
- Are there specific projects which operate independently of other work the group does?
- Where are the interconnections between the different kinds of work the group does?
- Where is there overlap between the tasks required to do different pieces of work?
- What aspects of its work does the group want to evaluate? Why?
- How do other aspects of the group's work affect or influence those the group wants to evaluate?
- to what extent should these be included in the evaluation?
- how can they be included?

Who should be involved in the evaluation?

Once the group has a picture of its work and has decided which part or parts it wants to evaluate, it will be possible to identify who is involved in doing that work and, therefore, who should be involved in the evaluation.

Depending on the design of the evaluation, being "involved in the evaluation" can include everything from collecting evaluation information or data to attending evaluation review meetings to receiving progress reports on the evaluation process to assisting in writing an evaluation report. To decide who should be involved, the group can begin by noting who does what regarding the work the evaluation will focus on. It is also necessary to consider the issues of structure, accountability, and decision-making authority.

For example, let's assume that a transition house receives funding for its follow-up program for ex-residents and the agency that funds the follow-up program requires evaluation as a condition of funding. The staff of the transition house operates as a collective under the general direction of a Board of Directors. The Board is responsible for the financial management of the house and members of the Board are official signing authorities for grants and/or contracts. However, let's assume two workers (out of the total staff of six) have developed the follow-up program, which the organization as a whole has endorsed and received funding for. The intention is that these two workers will co-ordinate the program as part of their jobs, with, perhaps, five volunteers doing most of the actual work of contacting ex-residents, organizing meetings or special social events, facilitating support groups, etc.

For the purposes of evaluating the follow-up program, decisions will have to be made about who is responsible or accountable for the operation of the program. Will it be the Board member(s) who signed the funding agreement? If so, will she/they be part of "the group" for the purposes of the evaluation, or is it enough for the Board to receive information on a regular basis as the work progresses? Or will "the group" consist only of the two staff members and the five volunteers in the program? Or will the entire Board and all staff and volunteers of the transition house be involved and considered to be "the group" for the purposes of evaluation?

It may be that the constitution or statement of organizational structure of the house covers such a situation, and spells out adequately the participation and responsibility of members of the organization. Or perhaps rules or guidelines will have to be developed to ensure that all the participants in the organization and in the specific project are clear about responsibility, decision-making and involvement in the follow-up program itself and in the evaluation.

Similar decisions will have to be made, for example, by a women's health education group funded to do educational workshops on the issue of women and stress management. If the group is also working on other health issues (perhaps funded from some other source), it will be necessary to determine whether all members of the group will be involved in the evaluation of the stress workshops or whether only those most directly responsible will participate. Central concerns will be balancing respect for the competence and autonomy of the workers involved in organizing the stress workshops with the need to recognize how these workshops will both be influenced by *and* influence the group's work as a whole.

Looking at the example of evaluating the overall operation of an organization such as a women's centre or status of women action group requires particular considerations regarding the numbers of people who should be involved in the evaluation. Indeed any organization with a large membership will have to decide how feasible and realistic it is to include everyone and conversely how to rationalize excluding anyone. The group may decide that paid workers and Board members should be automatically included. Since volunteers are essential to the operation of many organizations, the group will have to decide to include all or some of them—and on a basis that is, and appears to be, fair. If the organization has branches, committees, or representatives in more than one town or city, there will be added logistical considerations.

The evaluation must be both manageable and an accurate reflection of the work of the organization. It may be possible to determine categories of involvement based on who actually is responsible for doing the work, who provides assistance and support, who gives overall direction, and so on.

Degree of involvement in the evaluation could be directly proportional to degree of involvement in doing the work, with established feedback mechanisms to ensure that everyone who should have input

can have input. One solution may be to elect, self-select, or appoint an evaluation committee (see Appendix 3) with responsibility for representing the work of different aspects of the organization. Obviously criteria for involvement in such a committee would include familiarity with the overall work of the organization and both a commitment and ability to participate in the evaluation process and to inform the rest of the organization about the evaluation process.

If an evaluation committee is set up, it will be necessary to develop a regular reporting system to ensure the committee's accountability to the organization and to ensure that the organization as a whole is familiar with the evaluation process and how it's going. One possibility is having a "report from the evaluation committee" as an automatic agenda item for Board/staff/committee meetings throughout the duration of the evaluation.

The most useful evaluation is one in which the group participates as fully as possible in the entire process. By preparing ahead of time, the group will be better able to rationalize and negotiate for the kind of involvement it wants and needs.

Key questions to consider:

- Who is (or will be) actually doing the work? Be as specific as possible.
- Who else in the organization (e.g. volunteers, Board members, "clients" or people who use the organization's services) contributes to the work? What specifically do they do? How can they be involved in the evaluation process?
- Who from the group will have responsibility for the evaluation? Why? Who else from the group will be involved in the evaluation? Why? What involvement will they have, specifically?
- How will decisions about the evaluation be made? By whom? How will the decisions be communicated to others in the group?
- How will the group, as a whole, be kept informed about the evaluation process? About the evaluation findings?

What does the group itself want to learn from the evaluation?

A key part of a group's preparation for any kind of evaluation is identifying and clarifying what the group itself wants to know. The questions for the group to consider are: what information would be particularly useful to the group itself? Why?

Initially, the group's answers to these questions may be rather general. For example, the group may simply want to know,"Are we on the right track?" or, "Are we really doing what we set out to do?" One way of being more specific and practical is to use the outline of work the group developed earlier in the preparation phase. Take each kind of work or project on the list and consider what questions you have about each.

Be positive and practical. The emphasis should be on what you need to know for the work to be more effective. And take this opportunity to be as specific as possible about your assumptions, about what you want to accomplish and why. For each piece of work or project ask the basic questions of what, why, who, and how.

✸ What do we want to accomplish?

- e.g. for transition house follow-up program: We want to provide support to ex-residents. What kind of support? What does "support" mean? For all ex-residents? Or some? If some, which ones? Why?

- e.g. for educational workshops: We want to increase understanding of the issue; we want to improve the response women get from the health care system. Whose understanding? Whose response? What would "improvement" look like?

- e.g. for women's centre/status of women group: We want to assist women to take political action; we want to improve the status of women. In what ways, in relation to which specific issues? What does political action mean (lobbying, letters, briefs, starting new programs, organizing work...)?

✸ Why? What are our assumptions about the need for our work?

- e.g. for transition house program: Battered women told us they need ongoing support after leaving a transition house; isolation is a major problem for battered women . . .

- e.g. for educational workshops: Women are not getting an appropriate response from the health

care system; women themselves need more information; professionals will respond better if they have a better understanding of the problem . . .

• e.g. for women's centres/status of women groups: Women can be organized to press for changes in legislation, services; women's status can be improved; specific legislation, services can be improved/changed. Which issues? Which legislation? Why have we identified this issue, legislation?

✸ Who do we want to reach?

• e.g. for transition house program: Ex-residents of our transition house, of other transition houses? Why?

• e.g. for educational workshops: Women who have experienced the problem? Women generally? And/or professionals in the health care system? specific doctors, nurses, etc. Why?

• e.g. for women's centre/status of women group: Women in our community, province, region, country? Women affected by specific issues? Which women and why? Which issues and why?

✸ How do we plan to accomplish our objectives?

• e.g. for transition house program: Social events? Six-week support group with trained facilitators? Drop-in program? Phone or write to ex-residents to describe program? Ads in laundromats, local papers, etc.?

• e.g. for educational workshops: Investigate the issue further; develop workshop package; get resource people; schedule workshops; advertise them, etc.

• e.g. for women's centre/status of women group: Public education? Consciousness-raising groups? Lecture series? etc. Get media coverage of issues? Organize regular meetings, drop-in centre? Write briefs on specific issues? Use lobbying, advocacy? Develop information packages for women? etc.

Next, consider what information the group needs in order to answer the questions it has about its work. The following are examples of information you might want:

• Who participated in our program/workshops/centre or group? in what ways?

• How many women/decision-makers, etc. are we reaching? What kind of contact have we had with them?

• What is the response to our work from women? from the participants in our programs? from the community/government/ institutions? Be specific.

• What changes have we helped to bring about?

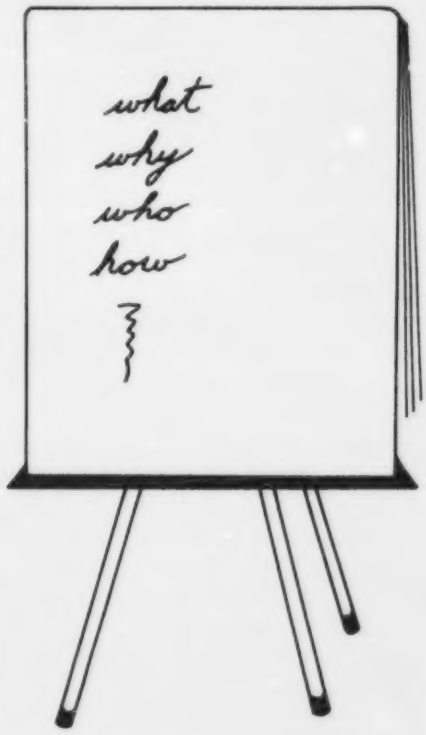
• How well did we carry out our plans?

• What changes did we have to make to our plans, and why?

• How did other groups, events, individuals, influence what we did?

• What would/could we do differently in the future? why?

• What helped or hindered our work?



How can information or data be collected to answer the group's questions about its work?

While an evaluation process is a formal way of collecting and assessing information, most groups do have organized ways of keeping track of what work they're doing and how it's going. At this point in the preparation phase, the group can identify what information it is already collecting, how the methods it's been using could be improved for evaluation purposes, and how it could collect any additional information it wants or needs, according to the questions it has about its work. Use the list of information needs you developed earlier in the preparation phase as a guide.

For example, if you use a log book to record telephone calls or events or meetings or things to do, the entries in the log will probably have a lot of information about what work is being done, who the group has contact with, what other groups or individuals want from your group, and so on. Perhaps it may be necessary to record more information in the log, such as, how did people hear about your group or decide to contact you? Should "to do" lists be checked off or updated when specific tasks are accomplished? Should workers be more precise in the information they record in the log? etc.

Similarly, a group's correspondence files and meetings files will probably contain valuable information about demand on the group's time and resources, the issues it's addressed, response to its work, etc. How can these files be used in an evaluation to answer questions the group has about its work? Would they have to be re-organized or streamlined? What other records does the group keep? Will confidentiality be an issue the group has to deal with? Are there some records that must be kept strictly confidential? Can information be taken from some records without contravening confidentiality? How?

If the group keeps newspaper clippings or notes on television or radio coverage it's received, these can be used to assess both response to the group's work and how events or actions outside the group's control influenced the work. Does the group distribute any forms or questionnaires to get feedback on its work? If so, are these readily available to see what responses people have had to the group's work? Are there additional questions that should be included to help you assess your work? If not, what people, agencies, and organizations should be asked for feedback on the group's work? What questions should they be asked?

In this preparation phase of the evaluation process it is useful to explore a range of possibilities for collecting information that will help to answer the questions the group itself has regarding its work. In addition to the information the group already collects, consider what other information can easily be obtained and how that can be done. Clarify in each case *why* the information is needed; how it will be useful; and who, from the group, can/should collect it. Identify the gaps in information that you want and need to fill. Note the questions you have about collecting information—how possible is it, how time consuming, how essential, and so on. Estimate the resources (time, money, commitment) required to gather the information the group has decided it wants to have. Be sure to include this kind of estimate for the information collecting the group does as a regular part of its work. These estimates are the first step in figuring out how much an evaluation might cost and what a realistic budget for it would be. Making these estimates will show how much of the evaluation work can be integrated into the group's ongoing work and how much is extra work.

Next, review the list to set some priorities (however preliminary they may be) about what information matters most to the group and what is less crucial. The more information that's collected, the more that has to be analysed—and data analysis can be a time-consuming proposition. However, the group's task in the preparation phase is to clarify its needs and set some priorities so that its needs can be central and clearly stated in future discussions regarding evaluation design.

Key questions to consider:

- Given the list of questions the group has about its work, what information does the group already collect that could help to answer those questions? Be specific. Who in the group collects the various kinds of information?

- What changes need to be made in the group's existing methods of collecting information to answer the questions it has identified?

- What additional information is needed? Why is

it needed? How can it be collected? Who could collect it?

- What questions do you have about how to collect the information required? How can you get the answers?

- What resources (time, money, commitment) do you need to collect the information? Does the group have the resources? Be specific.

- What are the group's priorities regarding the information? What information is most needed? Be sure to make a note for future reference of any of these questions the group can't answer or has trouble with.

What is needed to proceed with the evaluation process?

At this point in the preparation phase it is possible to draw some conclusions about how to proceed. Write a point-form summary of what you've decided so far, such as what work will be evaluated, who will be involved, and so on. Include the questions or concerns you have about any part of the evaluation process.

The group has been building an understanding of what evaluation of its work could look like by reviewing what work will be evaluated, who will be involved, what questions the evaluation should address and how to collect the information to answer the questions. Looking at the answers to the "key questions" in each of the preceding parts of this section should reveal where to go from here.

For example, by reviewing its work, the group has probably made at least some tentative decisions about what work should be the focus of the evaluation and why. If there are differences of opinion about which aspects of the work should be evaluated, they will obviously have to be resolved before proceeding with the evaluation. Perhaps it will help to go over again the list of key questions about what work will be evaluated. Perhaps it will be necessary to look at the work in light of the group's answers to questions about what the group wants to learn from the evaluation or how to collect information. Decisions about the scope of the evaluation will have to take into account what is possible or feasible and what is the ideal. Perhaps the group would prefer to include several aspects of its work in the evaluation but can't see how it will be able to collect or analyse all the information it requires. Rather than scaling down its expectations or cutting out of the evaluation some aspects of its work, this may be a time for the group to ask for advice from an individual or organization with experience in evaluation and collecting information. The group can then use this advice to make its own decisions about what work to include or leave out of the evaluation process.

Reviewing questions about who should be involved in the evaluation may well lead to decisions about setting up an evaluation committee or re-organizing some people's work load so those who should participate are able to. These decisions obviously have financial implications and it is important to note your estimates of the cost of meetings or the cost of hiring workers to fill in for workers involved in the evaluation, and so on.

By reviewing the possibilities for information collection, the group can identify ways in which a consultant or advisor on evaluation could help the group—in clarifying how much or what kind of information is necessary or in working out ways to collect and analyse additional information the group needs.

The group may find that it needs to collect and analyse more information than members of the group have time for. If so, the group should consider very carefully whether to cut back on the amount of information or whether to pursue the idea of hiring someone—from inside or outside the group—specifically to do some of that work. Or it may be necessary to consider having an evaluator work with the group to co-ordinate the collection and analysis of information.

However, any decisions (either to cut back on the information or to hire a consultant, advisor or evaluator) must be based on the group's own information needs and its own capacity to collect and analyse the information.

Be sure to complete the preparation phase first. Don't jump to the conclusion that an outside "expert" must be called in without thoroughly going through the steps we've outlined in the preparation phase. Solid preparation will help the group to be clear about its own resources and potential for undertaking evaluation on its own. It will enable the group to be clear about what, if any, outside help it may need. And the preparation process will help the group to identify the specific questions or points it wants an expert to assist with.

While it may seem easier simply to hire an outside expert, the evaluation's usefulness to the group will depend in large measure on how involved the group is in the evaluation and how well the evaluation is integrated into the group's ongoing work.

Points to consider in selecting a consultant or evaluator

If the group decides it requires an evaluator or consultant, or if an external evaluator is part of the evaluation package imposed on the group by a funder, for example, the group should consider what qualifications she/he should have. In the case of evaluating a transition house program, an understanding of the issue of wife battering would be an obvious qualification. Perhaps experience in actually working with battered women or work in alternative social services would be a requirement. For evaluating educational workshops on women's health issues, the evaluator or consultant could be expected to have an understanding of those issues, knowledge of the health care system, and experience in educational work. For a women's centre or status of women group knowledge of women's issues and perhaps experience in women's groups, advocacy work, lobbying, or an understanding of institutions (such as governments, the legal system, and/or community based agencies) would be prerequisites. If your group operates as a collective, an evaluator who has worked in or with a collective may make the evaluation process easier.

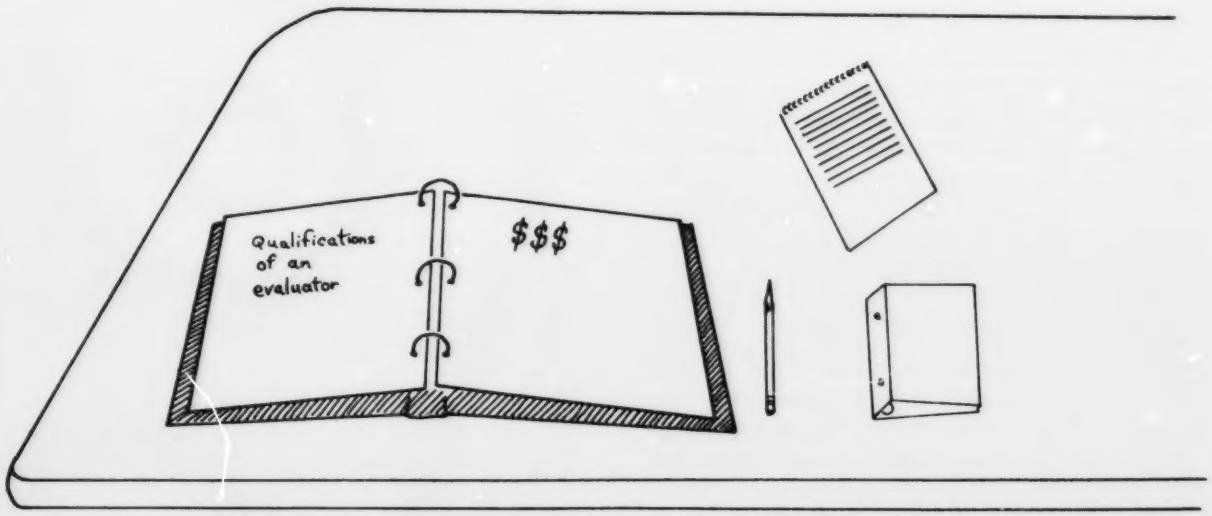
From reviewing your preliminary ideas about suitable ways of collecting information it will also be possible to identify some of the skills an evaluator should have. For example, if statistics or counting (i.e. how many women came to workshops, how many used the service, etc.) is only a minor part of what the group needs to know, an evaluator or consultant whose major strength is in statistics will not be appropriate. If interviews with staff and/or participants or clients is a priority you've identified, the evaluator or consultant will need to have demonstrated skills in interviewing and experience in using that method of collecting information.

It may be possible for the group to review examples of some evaluators' previous work to determine if they have evaluated similar kinds of groups/projects in the past, the approaches that they took and how it fits with your needs, and how the evaluators related to those groups/projects, how respectful, co-operative, and thorough they were.

The group may decide to make an initial list of evaluators who would be acceptable. Short of that, the group can develop a list of the criteria that it wants to use in selecting (or accepting) an evaluator.

Points to consider in estimating the cost of doing the evaluation

How little or how much assistance the group decides it needs will obviously influence the projected cost of the evaluation. Some funding



agencies allocate or allow costs of an evaluation in the budget of a group's grant. If this is the case for your group, check to see if it's an adequate amount in light of the costs you've estimated so far in the preparation phase. Be sure to take into account the staff time and other expenses (such as xeroxing, materials, etc.) involved in the group's own collection and review of information as well as the costs of hiring a consultant or evaluator. Also include the costs, if any, of a special committee or meetings to review progress. Will the budget enable those who want and need to participate in the evaluation process to do so? If the group's budget does not include evaluation costs, this is the time to include them. A group initiating an evaluation of its work may be able to secure funding to cover its costs. A group undertaking an evaluation in response to a funder's requirements will need to be clear about its costs in order to negotiate effectively with the funder.

Identifying possible uses of the evaluation's results

Finally, based on the preparation work, the group should consider who the "audience" for the evaluation findings should be. That is, does the group want the findings to be exclusively for the group's own use? How does the group plan to use the findings? Would the findings be useful to the funder as well as to the group? Is part of the purpose of the evaluation to document and analyse your group's work for the benefit of other groups doing similar work? This is the time to consider the possibilities and make initial decisions about how the results of the evaluation could and should be communicated and used.

Consider what rules and limits you want to establish regarding how much and what kind of information from the evaluation will be made available to organizations and individuals outside the group, and when. As a general rule, no evaluation findings should be released to "outsiders" until all the data is analysed. If there is prior agreement, progress reports or interim reports can be prepared and released at designated times during the evaluation process.

Summary

The preparation phase we've outlined in this section is designed to empower and inform groups embarking on an evaluation. The aim of preparation is to clarify what the group needs and expects from the evaluation process in order to ensure that the evaluation is actually useful to the group itself. It is a way for the group to figure out what its evaluation needs are so that the group's perspective will be central to the evaluation.

Key questions to consider in summarizing the preparation phase:

- Can the group itself collect and analyse the information it needs to evaluate its work? If so, what costs are involved? If not, what kind of assistance does the group require?

- Is it necessary to hire a consultant or evaluator to carry out the evaluation? If so, what are the criteria or qualifications the group wants to set? What is the estimate of the costs involved?

- What is the group's initial estimate of the budget for the evaluation? Be as precise as possible. Where will the money come from? When? Who from the group will be responsible for getting the funding required?

- How can the evaluation findings be used by the group itself? By "outsiders?" Specify.

- What rules or limits (including confidentiality and access to the group's files and records) does the group want to place on evaluation information and findings?

NEGOTIATING FOR THE EVALUATION METHOD THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP

Steps in negotiating

1 Review what your group understands to be the funder's reasons for funding the group. Check the funder's brochures or correspondence with your group for statements about mandate, criteria, objectives, etc. If you don't have this kind of information, ask the funder to provide it. Also review any verbal communication between representatives of the funder and your group.

2 Compare the funder's reasons for funding the group with what the group understands it's been funded for. Note points of difference and agreement.

3 Determine what requirements the funder has for evaluation. What work does it want the evaluation to focus on? Why? What time period? What criteria does the funder intend to use to evaluate your group's work? What does the funder expect from an evaluator? How does the funder plan to use the results of the evaluation?

4 Compare the funder's evaluation requirements with your group's requirements and plans for evaluation. How well do they fit? Where are there differences, agreements, questions? What points will you need to negotiate with the funder? Summarize the comparison and send it to the funder for written comments, corrections, clarification.

5 Before the evaluation begins reach agreement with the funder on the goals and process of the evaluation. Use meetings or an exchange of letters between the funder and the group to clarify what's involved in the evaluation and to sort out any differences or disagreements. Put all agreements in writing for reference during the evaluation.

6 When the evaluation is underway, both the group and the funder should also record any changes they agree to make to the evaluation process.

If your group requires funding to evaluate its work or if the evaluation is in fact a requirement of the group's funding, it may be necessary to negotiate with a funder (or with an evaluator) to ensure that the evaluation meets the group's own needs.

Different funding agencies have different requirements regarding evaluation. It is safe to say that all funders want an accounting of how a group spent the funds it received. Most funders also expect a report outlining what work the group did with the money it received and whether the group accomplished what it set out to do. Did it influence its "target group," reach the audience it aimed at, etc? They expect a report that is strong on numbers—how many activities, workshops did the group undertake, how many people did the group serve/reach/involve. For some funders this kind of relatively simple accounting is sufficient. Others require a major evaluation with extensive documentation of all aspects of the group's work. The scale of the evaluation process a funder requires is usually directly proportional to the amount of funding involved.

Funders also have different approaches to the way evaluation is done. For example, Health and Welfare Canada's funding programs—such as the contributions programs of the Health Promotion Directorate and Welfare Demonstration grants—have indicated that projects they fund must be evaluated "as objectively as possible" (Health and Welfare Reference Manual 1977, p. 14). They suggest using an "independent evaluator" for all but the most short-term and straightforward projects. (Health Promotion Directorate Applicants' Guide, 1983, p.6)

Some funders may permit flexibility in evaluation. They may state that the evaluation design and the selection of an evaluator should be "mutually acceptable" to the funder and the group being funded. They may allow the group to be responsible

for selecting the design and evaluator according to guidelines the funder sets out. However, in other cases, the funding agency may impose strict evaluation requirements on the group.

In all cases, the usefulness and appropriateness of the evaluation to the group will depend in large measure on the group's ability to participate in the decisions regarding evaluation. Therefore, it is essential that the group is as clear as possible about its own evaluation needs and interests and about the relationships between evaluator, funder, and the group itself.

The first step in the negotiating process is to clarify how the needs and expectations of the group and the funder fit. It is essential to be as clear as possible about why the funder wants the evaluation to be done. What purpose will the evaluation serve for the funder and for the group? What does the funder want the evaluation to address? What use will the funder make of the results of the evaluation? All these concerns will influence the evaluation method that is used and the evaluation process itself. They should be declared "up front"—before the evaluation actually begins.

The process of clarifying interests

The group, through its preparation, will have clarified its evaluation interests (that is, what its needs and requirements and proposals are) and will have some sense of what it would expect the evaluation process to be.

The funder, however, also has certain evaluation interests or objectives.

The evaluator, when she/he comes on the scene will also have a set of objectives.

These objectives and interests must be made clear and must be understood by all concerned. After negotiation, the final objectives for evaluation will have to be formally accepted by all sides.

To get to that point requires, first of all, that the funder state in writing what it wants. Some agencies (e.g. Health and Welfare Canada's programs) have a standard set of objectives for evaluation of projects they fund. A group receiving funding from such an agency may be fortunate enough to receive and review these objectives before applying for funding. However, in most cases, the objectives are meant to cover a variety of projects, groups, and situations, so they are open to interpretation. It is essential, therefore, that the funder—through its representative (field officer, project officer, etc.) explain what the evaluation objectives mean in relation to your specific group and work. It is also essential that this interpretation be an *official* interpretation, which is accepted by the "powers that be" in the funding agency and not just the view of the individual representative. So the cardinal rule of the negotiation process is: *get it in writing!*

The group's first step in the negotiation process is to review any statements the funder has made about why it is funding the group and why evaluation is required. Review the written statements—e.g. letters that were exchanged when the group was applying for funding, ads or circulars the funder sent out to elicit applications, and/or a manual or booklet that explains the program under which your group is funded. Make notes of any verbal statements the funder's representative(s) may have made to any representative(s) of your group during the time you were applying for funding. Compare all these statements with your group's own statements of what it intends to do. It may help to list points in the funder's statements and juxtapose specific things your group intends against each point.

Use these pieces of information to write up your group's understanding of why you've been funded and why evaluation is required. Be as precise as possible. Note any confusion you have or contradictions between written and verbal statements.

Send this to the funder's representative stating that this is your understanding and asking for correction or clarification if your understanding is *not* shared by the funder.

Review the funder's response carefully. Be prepared to write back if the funder's response is unclear or at odds with any points in the group's understanding.

Either as part of the process outlined above or as a follow-up, the group must also clarify what the funder expects and requires of the evaluation process itself. The group, by initiating an exchange of written understandings regarding the evaluation process, can take the opportunity to state its needs, assumptions, questions or suggestions (as determined in its preparation work) and ask for the funder's comments or concerns. If meetings between representatives of the group and funder are used to clarify what's expected and needed, it's in the group's interests to develop a written outline of its needs, assumptions, questions or suggestions

regarding evaluation to use as a checklist in the meetings. Always write up and send to the funder a statement of agreements that were reached in each meeting.

It's important to note here that the aim of negotiation is a suitable, hassle-free evaluation. Both funder and group (and, of course, evaluator) will benefit if basic assumptions, objectives, and intentions are clear from the outset. Taking into account that the representatives of both funder and group may change over time, a written record of agreements and understandings is essential. Also, the representatives have to report to others in their organizations and a written record makes this easier. Further, if needs or requirements change during the course of the group's work and the evaluation, the original agreements can be renegotiated (using the original set as a reference point).

The negotiation process we've recommended is somewhat more formal and time-consuming than may be considered necessary in all cases—especially if a good working relationship has existed between the funder and the group. However, the importance of beginning an evaluation with common understandings warrants taking the time and formalizing the process. Everyone's interests, but particularly the group's, are protected by arriving at a written statement of agreements about the evaluation.

Nevertheless, the negotiation process does *not* assume hostility from either the funder or the group. If there are disagreements or differences in needs that might contribute to hostility, the negotiation process is a useful means of dealing with them.

The underlying assumption in the process is that, in relation to the work the group is doing, there is a commonality of interests: it is assumed the funder wants and expects the group to succeed in its work or it wouldn't be funding it in the first place; and similarly, that the group intends to succeed and knows what it can do or it wouldn't have applied for funding or be doing the work.

This does *not* mean that the funders and the group necessarily have the same political perspective, values, or ideologies. On the contrary, in the case of most women's groups, the groups' aims may well be to challenge or change the policies, values, or perspectives of the funding institution or government. So conflicts of interest are common. The fact remains that, if a group is funded, the funder is essentially indicating it wants that work to be done and will pay for it to be done. Therefore, the focus in the evaluation must be the work itself—whether and how well it is proceeding. And on this point both funder and group should be in agreement.

Negotiation is meant to serve as a way of checking and being sure that goals and intentions and understandings in relation to the evaluation of the work are, in fact, shared. In some cases it will also be a way of becoming clearer about what both funder and group really mean by what they say. Both funding agencies and women's groups may use a kind of "shorthand" or jargon that makes sense in the appropriate context but may need clarification to "outsiders." If it happens that there are misunderstandings or if differences are irreconcilable, it is clearly better to know sooner rather than later. And, most important, by preparing for evaluation and negotiating with the funder for agreement on the evaluation process, the group can become a more active and assertive participant in an evaluation that will be useful in its work.

Questions to consider

Funding objectives

Why is the funder giving money to your group? What does the funder expect the work of your group to accomplish?

For example, some agencies set priorities each year which require that they give funds to certain "target groups" (such as women, native people, youth, etc.). Did your group qualify for funding because your work is directed towards women or

will employ women or deals with issues of concern to women? If so, does the funder have requirements about which women (rural women, single mothers, battered women, etc.) or which issues you're to deal with? Ask for specifics.

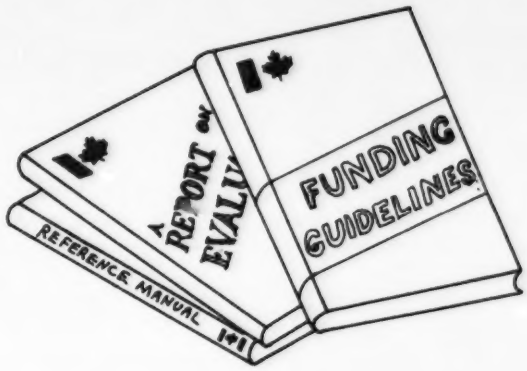
Some funding agencies give money for "demonstration projects" to support "new" or "innovative" approaches to problems or issues. If your group is funded under such a program, it is important to know what the funder sees as new or innovative or unique about your group's work/project. Ask for specific examples. Also, demonstration funding implies that the funder will want to "compare" your approach with that of other, perhaps more traditional, groups. If this is the case, ask the funder which other groups it has in mind so you can learn something about their work. And ask for examples of comparisons the funder might want to make. The whole concept of "demonstration" funding is a subject of considerable debate within government departments; it is a debate groups can get caught in. Clarity about your specific funder's definition of "demonstration" projects is essential.

If your group is being funded to promote "change" in a particular issue or set of issues, it's important to know what the funder considers "change" to be. Again, ask for specifics. Perhaps the funder can give examples of change other groups have produced which would clarify what is meant by change. Is it a specific piece of legislation you're being funded to get changed? If the focus is attitudinal change, whose attitudes are the target? On what basis will it be decided whether change took place or not?

Requirements of evaluation

Why does the funder want your group's work to be evaluated? Perhaps it's to justify the decision to fund you. If so, it would help to know what constitutes "justification." Is it numbers (e.g. number of women served, reached, employed, etc.)? Is it changes that are expected as a result of your work? If so, how do the changes the funder expects fit with those your group expects? To whom does the funder have to justify the decision to fund you? Politicians? Another level of the bureaucracy? Other levels of government? Other groups like yours? What do *they* expect?

Is evaluation a standard requirement of funding? If so, you can ask for examples of evaluations of other groups funded by this agency. What criteria does the



funder use to evaluate groups? If terms such as "indicators," "measures of success," "outputs" are used in the criteria, getting specific examples of what these terms mean will help you to know what you're dealing with and how your work will fit.

If the funder uses evaluation as a way of documenting what funded groups do (how well they meet their objectives, what strategies or approaches work better than others, etc.), try to find out what the funder usually does with evaluation reports. Are the reports distributed to other groups? To institutions/government departments? To the management of the funding agency?

What time period is the evaluation to cover? Is it intended for all or part of the period for which the group is funded?

What does the funder expect in an evaluator? If the evaluator is to be "objective" or "independent," ask for examples of what that means—particularly in terms of the funder's expectations or requirements of the relationship between evaluator(s) and the group. How does this compare with what your group wants and needs? If possible, find out who the funder has used in the past as evaluators. Ask for examples of their work. It may be possible to check with some of the other groups who have been evaluated: How did it work for them?

What qualifications or credentials do these evaluators have? Do they seem appropriate to the work of your group? How much involvement have other groups had in selecting the evaluator(s) and the evaluation design? Does the funder reserve the right to hire the evaluator and/or decide on the design? How much room do you have to negotiate?

The answers to all these questions will influence the evaluation and help you to know what to expect from the evaluation process. To summarize, you need to be clear about:

- What the funder wants the evaluation to focus on.
- How the funder expects the evaluation to be done.
- What measures or criteria are important to the funder.
- What involvement in decision-making your group can have.
- What credentials or experience the funder wants in an evaluator.
- What relationship the funder expects the evaluator to have with your group.
- The purpose of the evaluation report.
- What the funder expects in terms of distribution of the report.

This information from the funder, coupled with the group's own decisions about what will suit its needs and situation, provides *the basis for negotiating* for an evaluation design, an evaluation process, and an evaluator acceptable to both funder and group.

In the negotiating process, both sides must be as clear and specific as possible. Assume "success" is a common goal. Put all agreements in writing to be used as reference points throughout the evaluation process.

DEVELOPING THE EVALUATION DESIGN

This section outlines a recommended process for putting together an evaluation design. The steps involved in developing an evaluation design are the same for a group undertaking its own, self-administered, internal evaluation and for a group having their work evaluated by an external evaluator. There may be some variations depending on the project needs and evaluator(s) involved, but these key elements should always be reviewed.

The term "evaluator," in this section, refers to either an internal evaluator (or internal evaluation committee) or an external evaluator. Where we mean to refer to just one kind of evaluator, it is made clear in the text which one we mean.

Finalizing the evaluation focus and assumptions of success

Focus

Once the preparatory work outlined in the previous section has been completed and an evaluator is in place, it is time to finalize the decisions made during the preparatory discussions. First on the list is to clarify the evaluation's focus and write out the basic assumptions that can be made about the work. This process should be done together by the evaluator and the group, thus offering both an opportunity to critically examine the very heart of the project prior to finalizing the evaluation objectives.

In order to clarify the focus of the evaluation the following questions should be answered:

- What do we want to *know*?
- Why do we want to know it?
- Who is the evaluation intended for?

Listing and discussing the responses to these questions allows everyone's perspective to get out on the table before the evaluation begins. If there are major differences it's best to sort them out at this stage. And often useful additions can be made to the project plans.

A joint discussion between the evaluator and the group is one way of clarifying the evaluation's focus when the evaluation is beginning at the same time as the project. However, if the evaluation is starting *after* the project has begun, the evaluator may find it useful to first interview workers responsible for various parts of the project. She would ask the same questions listed above as well as asking workers to actually describe their work. After completion of the interviews the evaluator would review the material and *then* meet with the group to discuss the evaluation focus and assumptions.

Assumptions of success

The evaluator and group should also review what their assumptions of success are for the work at hand. This is another discussion which will have a very direct effect on what is evaluated (and how) and must take place before the evaluation objectives can be written up in final form.

The group can use the assumptions generated in the previous "preparing for evaluation" section as a basis for beginning this discussion.

Only when you know what you think constitutes success can you identify what is actually to be measured in the evaluation process. Be sure to consider what *degrees* of success would look like too, as there should be a basic commitment to bringing about a satisfactory conclusion to the project even when there are areas in which the objectives might not be fully met.

It is also important to understand that much of the work of women's groups goes against the status quo, and this must be taken into account. Ask yourselves, "Whose interests is the success serving?" as a way to double check.

Some types of questions one might ask and discuss are included in the following examples. (Please note

these are only *examples*. The approach can be extended to any evaluation situation):

LOBBY GROUP

Focus: What are the group's reasons for lobbying? Is the focus to change legislation, to change attitudes of legislators and/or the general public, to encourage the development of an issue in a certain way, to politicize a large/small/specific/general population of women? All of these require specific attention in an evaluation so it is important to fully discuss which one(s) the group wishes to deal with.

Assumption: Is success considered to mean that legislation/policy is actually changed? Is the lobby *un*successful if policy is not changed, or will the group consider other (yet unknown) forces that might have impinged on the work? Can success be assumed if large numbers of people become involved? If politicization is assumed to be a measure of success, how can one measure the politicization of women?

SERVICE GROUP

Focus: How do the objectives of the Transition House work to meet the needs of women? Does the Transition House want or have to meet the needs of children or batterers? What about doing public education?

Assumption: When would those objectives be considered to be met? Does the group consider its work successful if a battered woman returns to her husband? If she decides to live on her own? Is "success" measured by the numbers of women and children who use the house? Is the house considered successful if it is well accepted by the rest of the community? How can we measure any level of empowerment battered women might feel as a result of their stay at Transition House?

EDUCATION GROUP

Focus: Is the group focusing on the education of the general public or professionals, or women only? Is the work aimed at specific skill development or attitude change, or the acquiring of knowledge?

Assumption: Are the objectives met if large numbers of people show up to programs? Does success mean actual change can be measured in people's skill levels? How can any attitudinal change be measured? Is success some indication that women are empowered from the education project?

Determining the context of the work

Determining the context of the work means looking at the physical, social and economic situation in the community (and society generally) in which the project is being undertaken in order to determine what effects that will have on the work and on the evaluation. For example: is the project taking place in one community or neighbourhood, or more than one? How close are the communities and what kind of transportation links exist between them? What is the economic base of the community? What other social services exist for women? What is the present economic situation of the town—boom, bust, stable, depressed? What kinds of employment exist for women? for men? Are there other women's groups doing work on this topic or in this region?

Again, this discussion should take place between the evaluator and the group so everyone's knowledge and experience can be utilized. At the same time the state of the issue/service that is the basis of the project should be discussed. Is this work new to the group? New to the community? Is it a contentious issue? What is the history of previous work on this issue in the town or region?

The answers to questions such as these will not only help the project begin as appropriately as possible, they will guide the group and the evaluator in understanding the eventual impact of the work itself. A project does not succeed or fail on the basis of its objectives or work plan alone; the context within which the project is placed has a powerful effect that is all too easily overlooked or misunderstood.

LOBBY GROUP

The physical accessibility of a group to whatever level of government that is to be lobbied will have an effect on the choice of lobby tactics. Or, lobbying for more funds may be affected by the state of the local, regional and provincial economy. Also, the varying stance of different political parties on issues being lobbied will have an effect on the work.

SERVICE GROUP

Local women's use of a transition house will be affected by the size of a community and the regional population, and the availability of social services. Economic fluctuations can have a direct impact on how and if women use a transition house.

EDUCATION GROUP

Are there other educational facilities competing

for women learners? Are there suitable facilities to use? What is the transportation situation like for women who might want to come to educational programs? Are there positive or negative attitudes towards status of women issues in the community? Is it safe for women to attend night-time programs? Are there facilities for childcare if women with children wish to come to programs?

Finalizing the evaluation goals and objectives

Once the evaluator and the group have identified the evaluation's information needs, clarified the focus and assumptions of success, and outlined the context of the work, they will then have the appropriate information needed to finalize the evaluation goals and objectives. If these goals and objectives are specific and clear, it will be possible to measure how they were achieved and when it's time for the work to be over.

It is important to note that the *evaluation* goals and objectives will utilize the *project* goals and objectives but will *not be the same*. The evaluation goals and objectives will relate directly to what the *evaluation* is trying to do, i.e., to describe and measure a project's progress and impact. The project goals and objectives are geared to the planning and enactment of the project. The examples we use in the charts clarify this.

A *goal is defined as a broad general statement of what the evaluation is trying to accomplish* and *objectives are specific measurable statements of what is to be accomplished by a given point in time*. See Appendix I for a description of how to develop goals and objectives.

Obviously the evaluator and the group must agree on the evaluation goals and objectives. There must be a firm commitment from both parties to communicate clearly and immediately about any need to adapt or change any evaluation goals and objectives during the process of the work.

LOBBY GROUP

Sample project goals	Sample project objectives	Sample evaluation goals	Sample evaluation objectives
1 to develop the lobby skills of women in the community	1 to research and produce a how-to kit on lobby skills	1 to examine the effectiveness and impact of the lobby design and action on local women	1 to provide feedback to project workers re their effectiveness in accomplishing the project in the manner intended
2 to lobby on the issue of pornography	2 to actively involve women from the community in a co-ordinated lobby at the appropriate local/provincial/federal levels on the issue of pornography	2 to examine the effectiveness and impact of the design and action on those being lobbied	2 to document the process of attitude change on the part of those being lobbied
	3 to design a lobby strategy that allows maximum participation by local women on the issue of pornography		3 to assess the effect of the lobby in terms of actual legislative change 4 to measure the impact on participating community women of the lobby design and action 5 to assess the effectiveness of the lobby kit as it was used by the community women

SERVICE GROUP

Sample project goal	Sample project objectives	Sample evaluation goal	Sample evaluation objectives
1 to provide some protection and information to battered women	1 to operate a transition house for battered women and their kids in a manner beneficial to them	1 to determine the effectiveness of the entire transition house service to battered women, to the helping services, and to the transition house workers	1 to describe the transition house, who uses it, why they use it and the impact of transition house services on them
	2 to develop a staff training package on counselling skills and legal information		2 to measure the effectiveness of the staff training program on workers and house operations
	3 to liaise with community legal, health and social services in order to advocate on behalf of battered women		3 to assess the effect of the liaison between transition house workers and systems people in terms of the results for battered women and any changes in attitude or policy

EDUCATION GROUP

Sample project goal	Sample project objectives	Sample evaluation goal	Sample evaluation objectives
1 to offer educational programming on status of women issues to the community	1 to determine what concerns local women have re status of women issues	1 to assess the educational programming in terms of its adequacy, appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency and side effects	1 to assess the effect of the educational programming on participants
	2 to develop educational programming on issues of concern to local women		2 to document the process of encouraging other institutions to develop status of women programs
	3 to carry out such programming		
	4 to encourage other educational institutions to develop status of women education programs		

Designing the tools for collecting evaluation data

At this point *in the participant focussed evaluation* the evaluator takes all the information she and the group have developed to date and begins to design tools (usually called evaluation instruments) for the group and the evaluator to use in documenting the project and the evaluation process, and collecting evaluation data. In developing the tools, the evaluator takes into account the time and resources available to the group and herself, the information that is needed for evaluation purposes, and the skills necessary to acquire the information.

Tools for describing the work of the project

Two types of record-keeping are useful in describing or documenting the work of the project—a form of *journal* and a *log book*. A *journal* is a detailed account of the day-to-day proceedings of the project including what happened each day (with specific notations as to why, etc.), accounts of conversations and other communication, and so on. Each project member can keep a journal, or one project journal can be kept by someone assigned to that task who is careful to check out events with other project members. Journals provide the basis for understanding and documenting the decisions made in relation to the project, its structure and its history.

A *log book* is less historical and more quantitative in that it records the number and type of day-to-day tasks and contacts (e.g., who is referred to whom, by whom, and what kinds of problems are brought to the project). It notes how busy staff are kept. The log book can be used by all members, and should be used consistently, documenting all the day-to-day work that comes into the project—phone calls, requests for information, service and education, etc. The log book provides an ongoing basis for looking at the amount of work that has been accomplished and documents the need for the project itself.

A well organized and confidential file system is an obvious necessity for any project, and an evaluator can also use the files to review the work as needed. The evaluator will regularly review project journals and logs as well as minutes of meetings and files. She may also choose to interview project staff during the course of the work in order to get a more in-depth perspective on project proceedings. Remember: the evaluator must also protect the confidentiality of her informants and must not discuss evaluation findings outside of specifically planned meetings held with the group. (Please refer to our earlier comments about project confidentiality in the section *How to Prepare for Evaluation*).

Tools for measuring how well the group achieved their objectives

There are many ways of asking questions, collecting data, or measuring in an evaluation and some methods are noted here. For example, closed questions—those which require a yes or no type of answer—give us very specific answers. But closed questions can also be very limiting. On the other hand, open questions can allow someone to give a rich and descriptive response that may also be difficult, perhaps impossible, to collate. So the methods of collecting data must be chosen carefully. Whatever forms are chosen, the evaluator and group must remember that at the end of the process the collected data has to be collated and analysed. The tools chosen, therefore, must enable them to gather and analyse information effectively and efficiently.

Aide Memoire

An aide memoire is a list of topics and/or questions that are asked by an interviewer. It is not a questionnaire but is a *topic guide* used to ensure that data is gathered systematically. Aide memoire means "a guide to memory" and it serves that function for the interviewer. It actually allows the interviewer to act more as a prompter than a questioner. The aide memoire is intended to be a very open and investigative way of gathering information. The interviewer does not pre-suppose the answers but allows the actual interview situation to generate its own answers.

In some cases, the information gained from the use of an aide memoire in one part of the evaluation may be used as the basis for putting together other more specific data-gathering tools such as a questionnaire. The interviewer uses the aide memoire in the interview to ensure she covers all the relevant topics in a systematic manner. She always writes out the ways in which the questions or topics were actually posed when she writes up the final interview notes. Informants' responses are written out in the first person, as they are given to the interviewer. A complete account of the interview must be written up by the interviewer, from her notes, as soon as possible afterwards. The

account includes any additional information that was given to her as well as her own impressions of the interview. (See Appendixes 10 and 11 for examples of aide memoires.)

Questionnaire

A questionnaire is self-administered, that is, a project worker would give it to someone to complete themselves. Questionnaires can be composed of open or closed questions and can collect statistical, quantitative information as well as descriptive material.

As almost all projects begin by wanting to know too much rather than too little, it is important to conduct a process of reduction by pre-testing all forms of questionnaires. This is done by having a few people complete the questionnaire, examining the results and amending the questions as necessary prior to actually starting the project.

An additional way to pre-test and reduce the number of questions is to provide the rationale for each question asked. Can each question be justified? If not, then it should be eliminated. This can be done as a verbal or written exercise.

The questions used can be changed if problems become apparent. However, changes must be strictly accounted for to justify the decision so always note the problem areas carefully and document the reasons for change.

In putting together a questionnaire it is important to start with a list of questions you want answered. Try to limit the number of questions. Phrase them clearly without asking two questions in one. Give clear instructions to people filling out the questionnaire, and ensure that the questions follow logically. (See Appendixes 4 and 5 for examples.)

Interview Guide (or Schedule)

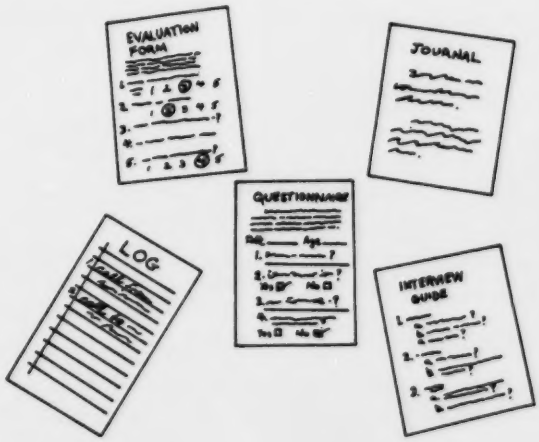
An interview guide is a series of fixed questions asked by an interviewer. The responses are written out by the interviewer, and a complete account of the interview is prepared when it is over, using notes taken during the interview. The questions asked can be open or closed or a combination of open and closed questions. Additional questions may be asked if necessary, but the interviewer must be sure to include them in the final write-up. (Appendix 2 contains some guidelines for interviewing, while Appendixes 6 and 7 have examples of interview schedules.)

Utilizing documents and records in evaluation

A *record* is any written statement prepared by an individual or agency for the purpose of attesting to an event or providing an accounting of a transaction, and forms an official chronicle that is part of a larger work—usually on processes and proceedings of public affairs. Some examples are: Hansard, birth records, city directories, membership lists, welfare records, court records, and business records.

A *document* is any written or filmed material other than a record that was not prepared specifically in response to some request from the investigator. Documents may be personal as well as public. Examples are: letters, memoires, diaries, position papers, speeches, newspaper articles, medical histories, government publications, photographs, policy statements, and directories.

Documents and records represent a natural source of information, are usually available on a low cost or free basis, and are important sources of data for research and evaluation work. For example, one can use records for "tracking" or following the official recordings of transactions or events. A review of court records would offer an official record of what happened to battered women in the courts. Or, if a group wanted to monitor development or change in public opinion on an issue, they could document this change by collecting newspaper and magazine clippings.



Some suggested choices of evaluation instruments

Using the project and evaluation goals and objectives described in the previous section, here are some examples of evaluative instruments which would allow documentation of the work and collection of evaluation data.

LOBBY GROUP

Project target group	Evaluation objective	Tools for documenting and collecting evaluation data
community women	1 to assess effectiveness of lobby kit 2 to measure political and action impact of lobby project on community women	1 post training questionnaire 2 interview at end of lobby project 3 worker's journals 4 personal interviews
people lobbied	3 to document personal and attitudinal change 4 assess effect of lobby in terms of actual political and legislative change	5 Hansard records 6 documentation of phone calls, letters, personal meetings 7 records of new legislation, Hansard, policy directives in the form of memos or policy books
project workers	5 to provide feedback to workers re their work	8 review meetings once each 6 weeks to look at adequacy, appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency and side effects of their work undertaken to date—meeting notes to become part of the evaluation

SERVICE GROUP

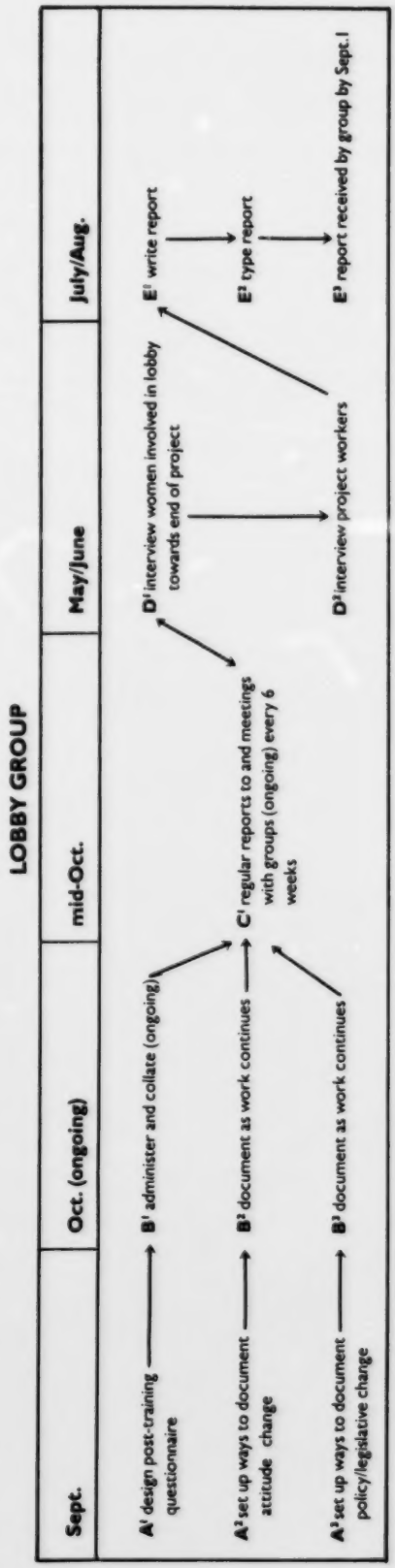
Project target group	Evaluation objective	Tools for documenting and collecting evaluation data
battered women	1 to describe how and why battered women use transition house and the impact on them	1 intake forms, follow-up forms, personal interviews
workers	2 to measure effectiveness of staff training program on workers and house operations	2 evaluation questionnaires after training program
community	3 to assess effectiveness of community liaison work	3 interview schedule for professionals/agencies 4 track progress of battered women through various systems using worker journals and documents/records

EDUCATION GROUP

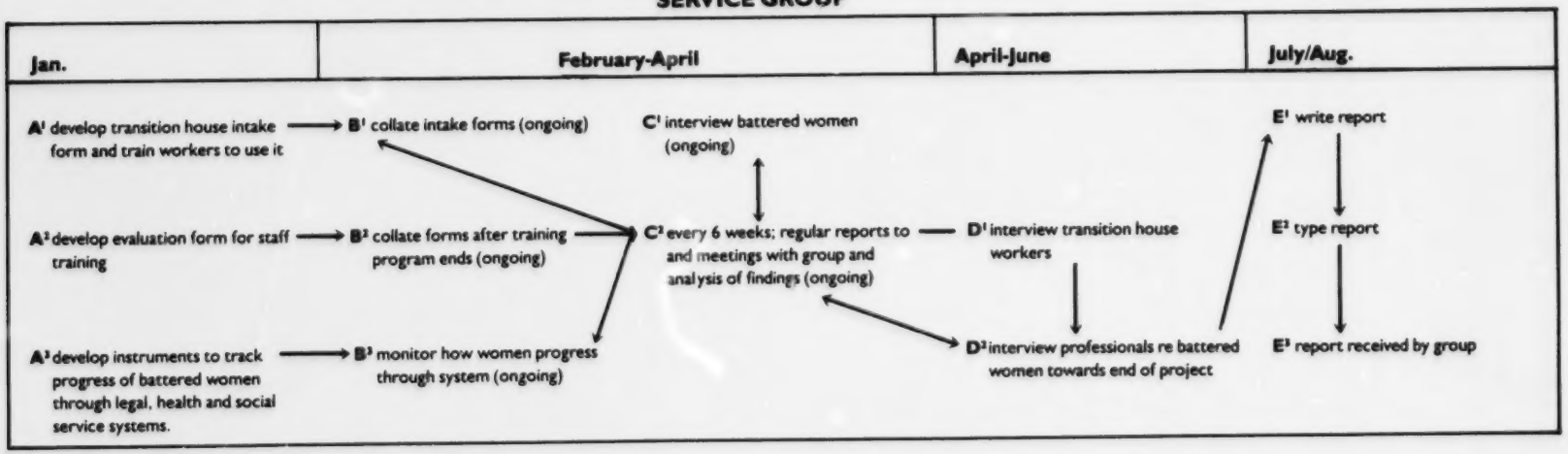
Project target group	**Evaluation objective**	**Tools for documenting and collecting evaluation data**
participants	1 to assess effectiveness of education programming	1 post-session evaluation forms
other educational institutions	2 to document progress re getting them to undertake status of women programming	2 documentation of meetings, phone calls, or community action, etc.

Developing an evaluation work plan and time table

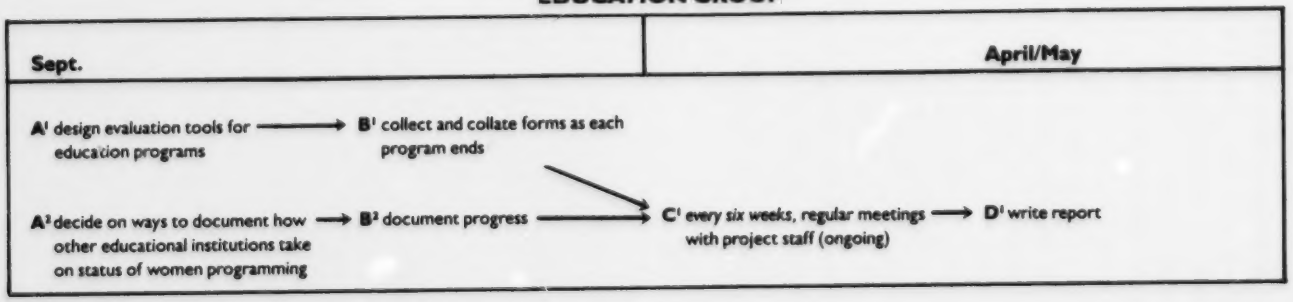
An evaluation design must include a basic evaluation work plan with a time schedule. Planning a timetable will ensure that the evaluator and the group are able to work together to meet the respective deadlines each will have. A PERT chart (program evaluation review technique) is a detailed time/work organizing device and is useful to develop. In fact, the entire project should have a PERT chart or some kind of work plan. The evaluator should, after consultation with the group, draw up a PERT chart and then meet with the group to ensure that her timelines are not in conflict with the project's. Appendix 13 contains specific instructions for development of a PERT chart. Pictured here are three finished charts for evaluation of the work of each of the three types of groups we are using as examples.


LOBBY GROUP
Sept.
Oct. (ongoing)
mid-Oct.
May/June
July/Aug.
A¹ design post-training questionnaire
B¹ administer and collate (ongoing)
D¹ interview women involved in lobby towards end of project
E¹ write report
A² set up ways to document attitude change
B² document as work continues
C¹ regular reports to and meetings with groups (ongoing) every 6 weeks
E² type report
A³ set up ways to document policy/legislative change
B³ document as work continues
D² interview project workers
E³ report received by group by Sept. 1

SERVICE GROUP


Jan.
February-April
April-June
July/Aug.
A¹ develop transition house intake form and train workers to use it
B¹ collate intake forms (ongoing)
C¹ interview battered women (ongoing)
E¹ write report
A² develop evaluation form for staff training
B² collate forms after training program ends (ongoing)
C² every 6 weeks; regular reports to and meetings with group and analysis of findings (ongoing)
D¹ interview transition house workers
E² type report
A³ develop instruments to track progress of battered women through legal, health and social service systems.
B³ monitor how women progress through system (ongoing)
D² interview professionals re battered women towards end of project
E³ report received by group

EDUCATION GROUP


Sept.
April/May
A¹ design evaluation tools for education programs
B¹ collect and collate forms as each program ends
A² decide on ways to document how other educational institutions take on status of women programming
B² document progress
C¹ every six weeks, regular meetings with project staff (ongoing)
D¹ write report

Deciding what to do with evaluation results

The evaluator and the group should, at the beginning of the work, clarify what they are going to do with the evaluation results. There are likely to be parts of the evaluation that will be of more interest to the funder, to the group, to the project participants and the general public as well. It may not be necessary to prepare one final evaluation report that details all aspects of the work. The funder may require only some summation of the project effectiveness whereas the group may be more specifically interested in understanding the effect of the process of the work. If there are new "findings" it may be useful to the project's long-term goals to make them public. This issue should be discussed between the evaluator and the group so differences in opinion can be dealt with. The evaluation objectives and the known needs of the funder and the group should be used as guides in making the decision about how to deal with evaluation results.

Agreement on evaluation design

Once the evaluator has completed her evaluation design it must be approved by the group and, in the case of an external evaluator, by the funder as well. If the evaluator has consulted with the group throughout the process, it is likely that the group will understand the evaluation design and be prepared to begin. When little consultation takes place, a group may see the final evaluation design as threatening and the evaluation work as overwhelming.

Some funders have a formal review process for all project evaluation designs they fund. In such a case the external evaluator should be cognizant of this review process while drawing up the design and be prepared to defend and amend the design as needed. Obviously, it is possible for the external evaluator to get caught between the needs of the group and the needs of the funder. It is useful for the group to be aware of the double bind the evaluator can get in so they can assist in sorting out differences.

Summary: Components of the evaluation design

This chart outlines the chronological process the group and evaluator must go through to produce the evaluation design and shows the components of an evaluation design outline.

Components of the evaluation design

Chronological process	results in	order in which it appears in evaluation design outline
1 meetings between evaluator and group to identify information needs	clarification of what evaluator needs to assess and why, using project objectives as a base for discussion	
2 meeting to clarify evaluation focus and assumptions of success	clarification of: • what do we need to know? • why do we want to know it? • who is evaluation work for? • how will we know we've succeeded?	1 evaluation goals and objectives
3 review of context within which work is taking place	understanding that project is not taking place in a vacuum, that other issues can and will affect outcomes	2 evaluation focus and assumptions 3 context of the work
4 finalization of evaluation goals and objectives	a basis from which to begin to structure the evaluation	4 evaluation methodology • statement of methodology • description of instruments • time frame
5 designing of the evaluation	actual tools to gather data	
6 development of evaluation time frame and work plan	a planned schedule to follow	5 how the evaluation work will be used
7 meeting re what to do with results of the work	agreement on how final results will be shaped and to whom they will go	

COLLECTING AND ANALYZING THE EVALUATION DATA

The work of collecting data can begin once agreement has been reached on the evaluation design. The evaluator is responsible for supplying the group with the appropriate evaluation instruments; for any necessary training in how to use the instruments; for collecting and collating any forms being used; and for beginning and reviewing data analysis. The evaluator and the group together are responsible for maintaining regular communication about how the project and the evaluation are proceeding.

Use of evaluation instruments

The evaluator must clarify with the group what kinds of instruments and forms are to be used and make sure the forms are collected appropriately and given to her for collation. It is important for the evaluator to remember that, for the group, evaluation is just one part of their project work and they are not likely to appreciate having to deal with excess amounts of paper. Handing out and collecting evaluation instruments at systematic and agreed upon times will benefit both the project and the evaluator.

Sometimes project members may be undertaking some evaluative interviewing, etc. themselves. To ensure this is done in a systematic way, the evaluator should review basic interviewing skills with project members and offer training where necessary. (See Appendix 2 for a listing of interview skills.)

Analysis of data collected during the evaluation

There must be no *public* discussion of the evaluative material while the project is in progress as this betrays any confidentiality that may have been promised. As well, it is unfair to the participants, the project, and the workers, to draw conclusions before all the necessary material has been collected and analyzed. (See Appendix 12 for some guidelines for data analysis.) It is useful, however, for the evaluator (external or internal) and the group to set up an evaluative review committee to meet on a regular basis. The evaluator should come to these meetings with data that has been collated and reviewed by her. This committee (or it may be the entire project) can do the following:

a Review and analyse the data collected
- what does it say?
- are we getting as much as we want/need?
- what's missing?
- can we isolate any themes?

b Adjust evaluative focus as needed
- are there questions we need to ask now that we didn't know about at the beginning?
- how do we best insert them now?
- if there have been criticisms of the work (from within or without) how can we use those to guide the ongoing evaluation and project?

c Deal with communication between evaluator and project/group
- are there any problems? why?
- ensure that evaluative work is being reported to other parts of the group as needed (i.e., the board, other staff, etc.)
- change process as needed

REPORTING ON EVALUATION FINDINGS

As noted earlier, there should be agreement at the beginning of the work about the way in which the evaluation results are to be documented. If a final report has been requested by the funder, the group's board, or the project workers, then it is the evaluator's responsibility to complete this report. Ideally, if regular evaluative review meetings have taken place, all parties to the work will have some idea of the report's content although final conclusions will need to be drawn up by the evaluator—working in conjunction with the group.

What goes into the report (or whatever final evaluative statement is decided on) will depend partly on who it is for and what they wish or need to know. The funder may be interested in knowing how well the objectives were met, whereas the group may also wish to understand the process of its work—what got done, how, by whom, and what the results were. It may be necessary to develop different reports or to recognize that some parts of the report may be deleted or included, depending on who it is going to.

Before the final report is written, the evaluator should prepare an outline of what is to be included in it. Although she need not stick rigidly to the outline, it will help in gathering material and formulating ideas. As the data is gathered and analysed, the outline can be revised as needed and reviewed by the group.

Uses of the evaluation report and findings

Evaluation results can assist a group in their short and long term planning on issues and actions. If a lobby group, for example, encountered serious difficulty in meeting its objectives, it may make decisions to radically change or eliminate lobbying practices they have used. In discussion of evaluative results and findings a group can more clearly define what it wants to do, who it wants to do it with and why it should or should not do it. As well, the discussion should help the group look at relationships that are useful (or not), and structures that could be strengthened or eliminated or changed.

In reviewing its evaluation, the group should engage in critical discussion about its work. The use of the word critical does not simply mean "criticism." Being critical involves looking for, and at, the positive and negative features of the work. It is not enough to point out those areas that did not work. You need to understand *why* there was a problem. Dealing with less successful areas of work in this way avoids focusing on blame. The allocation of blame is never the issue in an evaluation process; the purpose is to understand how things worked, or didn't, with a view to changing or correcting them. This is an important use of evaluation results.

Outside the group, the evaluation can be used to "prove one's worth" to funders, the community, or whoever needs to be convinced. The evaluation, depending on what it set out to do, may also prove a need for a service (or more of the same service). It can also assist in developing further analysis of a situation that may eventually result in policy or legislative changes.

Finally, group members and project workers should focus on the evaluation as a way to review their work and to ensure that all parts of it are acknowledged as useful and important to them. All too often groups will rush from one project to another, or fold up after a project is completed; it is too easy for the work to become invisible—to them and to others. It is crucial that women's groups recognize the importance of their work and see it within the context of the overall goals and work of the women's movement generally. An evaluation process and its results can help achieve this.

A sample outline of an evaluation report

• *1 Introduction to the project*

Describe:

a how project was conceived and conceptualized, funded

b what project goals and objectives were

c who was involved

d project structures

• *2 Description of evaluation methodology*

Describe:

a evaluation approach used and why it was chosen

b evaluation goals and objectives

c how evaluator was selected

d how instruments were designed and implemented

e how successfully the instruments chosen met the goals

f any limitations of the methodology to the work

g how (if interviewing was done) people were selected to be interviewed, who did interviewing, number of people interviewed, the range they represent

• *3 Analysis of evaluation results*

a outline objectives for each phase of the project

b note the results from the data collected

c make focus clear and be precise about what was assessed

d describe how conclusions have been drawn from the data

e present numbers where necessary

f in examining the answers to the evaluative questions look for patterns of response—note and explain both similarities and differences in those response patterns and relate them to the project framework

g do not try to cover *every* aspect of everything that everyone wants—pick out patterns, recurrent themes and analyse what these relate to

• *4 Conclusion*

a conclude with a summary of the work done and how well the goals and objectives were reached

b include recommendations for further work or recommendations arising out of the project

PART II: GUIDELINES FOR A SELF-EVALUATION MEETING FOR WOMEN'S GROUPS

Part II contains detailed guidelines to enable women's groups (or others) to undertake the process of self-evaluation.

The guidelines here, like those in previous sections of this Guide, use a participant focussed approach to evaluation. We have attempted to tailor the guidelines to what we know to be particular and unique features of women's issues and the structure and principles common to many feminist organizations.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF SELF-EVALUATION?

Self-evaluation can provide a valuable opportunity for a group to develop a clearer perspective on its work. It can be a chance to stand back from the day-to-day demands and pressures to assess the work that is being done; to identify the factors that influence the group's effectiveness; and, to determine improvements, if any, that should and could be made. The members of the organization can become clearer about the group's accomplishments (which tend often to get lost or under-rated) and what made them possible or difficult to achieve.

Self-evaluation is, therefore, a useful and beneficial process for any organization's development and should be built in from the start. It is also an important element in any full-scale "formal" evaluation and good preparation for an organization which is about to be evaluated by an "outsider" (for example, by a funder).

The process of self-evaluation works best when it is built into the group's work from the outset and is a regular practice. At the Research Centre, for example, we do a yearly evaluation of our work and we also evaluate each research project or workshop, etc., when it is completed. Doing self-evaluation regularly minimizes the amount of time it takes and makes it possible to incorporate the results and insights gained into ongoing work.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS OF SELF-EVALUATION?

The process of self-evaluation consists of reviewing eight question areas:

- history
- goals and objectives
- context
- description of work
- external relations
- accomplishments
- internal organization and structure
- implications for future work

It is recommended that this review take place in a meeting (or series or meetings, if necessary) of the paid and unpaid workers in the organization and of those who are otherwise involved in the organization (such as Board members, volunteers and committee members). In most cases it will help to use a facilitator for these sessions. She should be someone who knows and supports the group but is not integrally involved in its functioning. The facilitator's task is to keep participants on track and guide the discussion.

Use a flip chart, or put some newsprint on the wall, to record the discussion so that everyone can see what's been said as they go along. These notes should be written or typed up at the end of the self-evaluation meeting, referred to when necessary during the year, and used as a basis for discussion the next time the group decides to do self-evaluation.

The basic questions that should be answered in doing evaluation are simply what, who, when, how, and—always ask yourselves—why. We've found that it is important to keep the questions simple. The process should be undertaken seriously and with commitment but it should be relatively informal. It can even be fun. Set aside at least one full day to complete the work.

AREAS OF REVIEW FOR GROUP SELF-EVALUATION

1 History

Purpose

The purpose of this part of the evaluation is to *sketch the group's/project's history* according to participants' experience and perspective. Anecdotes and stories and individuals' memories of the "early days" are useful and important. However, emphasis should be on identifying and documenting any key points in the process, i.e. times when things changed and why, events (*internal* to the group or *external*—for example a conference or media event or government action) that were significant in pulling people together or making clear what should be done. An essential aspect of the analysis of the group's history is *why* times or events are considered important or significant.

How to do it

Questions to be answered could begin at the individual level:

- When did I first get involved? (dates or events)
- Why did I first get involved? (e.g. I wanted to work on 'X' issue, I wanted to meet people, I needed a job, etc., etc.)
- What work did I want to do with the organization/project?
- What was most important to me re what the group was doing or could do?
- How did my previous experience relate to the group's work?

Then consider:

- How did the *group* first come together?/begin to work?
- What were the first actions/activities the group undertook? and why?
- What were the most significant influences in starting the group?

2 Goals and objectives

Purpose

As a group is beginning its work (and before funding is applied for), it is essential that its goals and objectives be defined as clearly as possible and used as a touchstone or reference point as work proceeds.

Goals are broad, general statements of what the group is trying to accomplish. Objectives are specific measurable statements of what is to be done by a given point in time. See Appendix I for a description of how to develop goals and objectives.

It is important to remember that goals and objectives are subject to change as circumstances change inside and outside the organization. Self-evaluation is one way to incorporate any re-statement of goals and objectives to reflect the organization's new or different directions and work.

How to do it

i If there is (in a file, document, letter, minutes, etc.) a written statement of the group or project's goals and objectives, each participant in the evaluation should have a copy (noting the date it was written and where the statement is taken from) or it can be written on a flip chart or piece of newsprint and put up on the wall for everyone's reference throughout the evaluation session. Begin by reviewing these written statements of goals and objectives: i.e. clarify together what they mean. Discuss, or at least note, any disagreements or different understandings participants have about them. Note the specifics that participants agreed on or not.

ii In the absence of previously written statements of goals and objectives (or after reviewing written statements) you can come to an agreed

upon set of objectives by listing answers to the following questions and then reviewing them.

- Why did this group/project start? (you can refer back to the history discussion)
- What did we hope to accomplish? Why? Initially you can include things such as "We wanted to change the world. . . "Eventually you can refine them down to statements such as, "We wanted to help battered women,"or "We wanted to start a transition house."
- Whom did we want to reach? Be specific—e.g. if rural women were among those you wanted to reach, try to define more precisely what you meant by "rural women."
- How did we want to operate? For example, "We wanted to be efficient"; "We wanted to operate as a collective"; or "We wanted to operate in a way that would be supportive of each other as members of the group/project." List the principles or major concerns that participants in the evaluation say are important to them. Again be as precise as possible—i.e. it will be helpful if participants define what operating "efficiently" means, what "as a collective" means or what being "supportive" means—without spending hours on it!—in order to clarify assumptions and increase each other's understanding.

After reviewing any written statements of goals and objectives or after going through the above questions, take a little time to make a list together of the points you agree on. Put this list aside so you can come back to it later, at the end of the evaluation process.

3 Context

Purpose

Much of the work of an organization is determined or influenced by the environment or context in which it is located.

For example, a transition house for battered women, located in a small community—with very few social services, a scarcity of housing or jobs for women, and/or a poor economic situation—will have more difficulty than a house in a community with a range of services and sympathetic professionals and housing that is affordable.

A transition house cannot do everything for battered women, no matter how effective its staff or programs. The context in which it operates will have an effect on how much staff time is spent on helping residents find housing, or on working with the police and other agencies to provide better service to battered women, etc. The context can even affect residents' length of stay in the house and how many return to or leave the battering situation.

The context or environment of any group's work can influence its effectiveness, strategy and its accomplishments. Simply put, if the group gets cooperation from those agencies, systems, and structures it works with, it is more likely to be effective in attaining its objectives than if it meets resistance. Context, therefore, is an important factor to review in evaluating a group's work.

How to do it

In the self-evaluation process, include time to develop a brief sketch of the community. Describe briefly those elements of the community that relate most directly to your organization's work and characterize as best you can the positive and negative aspects of each element. The following list can guide this review, but add to it to reflect your own situation:

- *Political climate*—politicians, boards, political parties, levels of government. How supportive are they of your goals? How do they affect your group?
- *Economic situation*—jobs, businesses, etc. What's the situation generally for women in the community and for women who use your group's programs/services?
- *Housing, social services, health care*—What is the availability and cost of these services for women? Are there special programs or services for women? Are there professionals who are sympathetic to women's concerns?
- *Media*—What kind of access is there to the media? How are women's issues covered? Are there any helpful journalists? What are the problem areas, etc.?
- *Funding sources*—is local, regional, federal funding available and accessible? How receptive are funders to the issues you are concerned about?

4 Description of work

Purpose

This is the crucial part of the evaluation process. It can produce a picture of the group/project (or parts of it) that you've never really seen before. It should be a detailed list of the work that you actually do. It can be a time-consuming part of the process. Allow plenty of time for it.

How to do it

Included in a thorough review of work are not only questions about what precisely you do but also:

- who does what
- why you do it
- how you do it
- what is *not* getting done, and
- what resources (money, time and energy, outside assistance, etc.) you have to accomplish the work, and need to accomplish the work.

Be sure to include in the list of work not only obvious things like a newsletter or workshop but also things such as: organizing meetings; talking about the group/project to people outside; answering requests for information; planning specific activities or events; writing up funding proposals; regular staff/Board/collective meetings; maintaining the office (answering letters and the telephone, buying supplies, etc.); and so on.

One way to proceed is to make a list of all the pieces of work or activities you do and then go back and answer the why, how, who, and resources questions for each piece of work. Another approach is to take one piece of work or activity at a time and work through all the other questions (why, how, who, etc.) for it, before proceeding to the next activity or piece of work. If there are several staff members and/or volunteer workers with specific jobs to do, it may be useful to have each one take the lead in listing what's involved in each job and answer the questions for each, with the other participants in the evaluation contributing what they know too. Do *not* just repeat or recite job descriptions or work plans—instead, list actual tasks you do.

The approach you choose will, no doubt, depend on your preference and on how many tasks you have to cover. Just be sure you allow time to go through all the work of the group. And, if necessary, you can change to a different approach if you're getting bogged down or stuck on the first items on the list.

Also, note who is actually doing the work on the list(s). For example, if Board participation is a priority for your organization, you will be able to see how well that's working out. If the group has tried to involve volunteers to supplement the work of paid staff, you can see whether that's been working in practice. If some individuals have become overloaded with work, it will be possible as a group to see that and begin to think about how to deal with it. And from the lists of work and tasks involved, it will be possible to look at how the group's "people resources" and time are being used. This will add to your understanding of which parts of the group's work are in fact priorities, and to compare that to what the group said it wanted to accomplish.

In reviewing these lists together, you will be able to see what's involved in getting the group's work done and notice what aspects of the work have priority in terms of time. For example, the group may not have designated answering requests for information as an integral part of the work and yet that may take up a lot of time. Seeing this enables you to consider your options: to include answering requests as a priority if it's decided it's crucial; or to cut back in this area according to what the group thinks is important. It should also be possible to see what work is *not* getting done, where there are gaps, and what, if anything, has been left out. Recognizing this is a first step in deciding to make changes.

5 External relations

Purpose

Few groups function in isolation. It is usually necessary to work with other individuals and organizations—e.g. women's groups, government departments, the press, etc. The work with women's groups may be done cooperatively—to exchange information, to assist each other in common or similar tasks, or to represent or address joint concerns. The work with government departments might consist of an advocacy relationship, whereby the aim is to promote change in an individual's or organization's policies or practices. The work with the press might consist of information-sharing with the ultimate purpose of educating the public.

How to do it

List individuals and organizations that group members have worked with or dealt with.

In assessing the kind of relations you've built or had with "outside" organizations or individuals note the following:

- What were the influences on your own group's work—e.g. demands/suggestions, *and* how your group responded.
- Was there duplication of effort—i.e. were you doing work that was already being done by somebody else? Decide if the duplication was necessary or unnecessary.
- What support or assistance did your group receive? Was it good enough? What would have made it more useful?
- What support or assistance did your group give? Was it good enough? What would have made it more useful?
- What feedback did you receive? What was the response to your group's work (from "clients," members, people you worked with or involved in particular work)?
- What obstacles or difficulties did you face or have to overcome? What effect, specifically, did these have?
- Did you intend to work or have contact with groups/individuals that don't show up on your list?
- Are there groups/individuals on your list that you *did not* expect to work with or contact?

6 Accomplishments

Purpose

The purpose of this assessment is to see how the work of the organization is being done, how well it meets the objectives, or how far short it falls. The emphasis should be on the aim of the group or piece of work. Do not think simply in terms of success or failure.

How to do it

Keeping in mind the notes and lists you've made in the evaluation session(s) so far—the tasks, work, relations etc.—identify those things you've achieved. Ask what you accomplished by running a specific workshop, having the meetings you had, providing services, doing outreach, giving or getting information, lobbying, etc. Don't restrict yourselves to thinking only in terms of the objectives you started with. It may be that important achievements or accomplishments you've had were *not* planned for or anticipated. However, at the end of this process, look at your original objectives in the light of what you've identified as accomplishments or achievements to take note of changes in direction or gaps that have become apparent.

7 Internal organization and structure

Purpose

From the information derived from the self-evaluation process so far (items 1 through 6), the group will have a sense of how decisions are made, who does the work, etc. It is useful however to spend time looking at this in more detail.

The purpose of this part of the review is to assess how the organization functions internally.

Whether the group is a collective or a more traditional or hierarchical structure, whether staff are members of the group's Board or not, it is not uncommon for some decisions to be made or communicated informally over coffee or lunch as well as in formal meetings. In part, this is because not everyone goes to every meeting. In part, it may be because some members of the group are more interested in or are expected to focus on some areas of work. And, of course, it is sometimes necessary to make some decisions on the spot, with time enough to check with only a few other members of the group. It is not uncommon for some group members at some time to feel left out—to miss a decision or piece of information.

The group itself can decide what structure suits its purpose best. The self-evaluation process can show whether that structure is working well or needs to be adjusted.

How to do it

The aim is to check whether the group is functioning as its members want it to or whether changes need to be made in specific internal practices. The key questions are: *How are decisions actually made?* and, *How does communication within the group actually work?*

In this part of the self-evaluation process it is important to be *specific*: use *actual examples* from the group's work to focus the discussion of decision-making and communication. Piecing together different versions or accounts of what happened in each of a few cases should enable the group to identify patterns and to see where things went wrong and if the internal organization and structure is working as it was intended to or as the group wants it to.

8 Implications for future work

Purpose

This is the wrap-up stage, the time for putting together all that has been learned from the self-evaluation process.

How to do it

Review the notes (on a flip chart or in each person's notes) of the earlier question areas (1 through 7) and list the significant points: the problems or gaps that were identified, and the examples of how well things are going or specific accomplishments. Problems and difficulties will clearly be the main focus, but don't lose sight of the good things too.

Consider each problem in terms of what can be done about it rather than repeating or re-discussing each one. Look for any patterns or similarities among the problems as a clue to defining if the problems are a result of unclear objectives, the group's structure, the context in which you're working, or funding, and so on. Again, be as specific as possible about solutions or strategies and how they can be implemented, in practical terms, to overcome the problems.

Finally, look at what the self-evaluation process has made visible in terms of what the organization has become involved in or committed to. Is this what the group wants to be doing? What does it say about future work? What direction should the group move in from here? This is the place to determine priorities: to decide to do less of everything; to do more of "X" and less of "Y"; to "keep up the good work"; or, to change direction and set a new course.

CONCLUSION

Self-evaluation is basically a review, a process of assessing and making judgments. It is meant to help the group. The aim is to see more clearly what you, as a group, have actually been doing; to determine whether the group is on track according to what it set out to do; and, to identify ways to make things better.

It is important to remember that the focus of self-evaluation is the *work* of the group, not people. Difficulties or personality clashes among members of a group are not uncommon. However, the evaluation process is a way to deal with them in the context of the group's work and what the group came together to do; it is *not* a procedure designed to resolve personal differences (although it may provide some insight into the basis for them).

In doing self-evaluation, there may be a tendency to focus exclusively on any negatives that are uncovered. A balance is required. Self-evaluation should also make visible what a group has accomplished. Celebrate the success and the gains you've made. Pay attention to them: some of the most useful lessons will be learned from analysing how and why the good things were achieved.

APPENDIX I

PURPOSES, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

(adapted from Craig, Dorothy, *Hip Pocket Guide to Planning and Evaluation*, Learning Concepts, 1978)

PURPOSES

These are the *broad general reasons* why you, your organization, or your project is involved in doing something. For example, a transition house purpose might state "we are involved in this work because we want to work towards the elimination of wife battering." An educational women's group purpose might state "we are involved in this work because we are concerned about the low status of women in our society." A lobby group might say "we are involved in this work because we think women's interests are invisible to decision makers." Remember, the purposes are the broad and general reasons you are involved and there is usually more than one reason.

GOALS

Goals are statements of what you, your organization or project are *trying to accomplish*—again they are stated quite generally. For example, a transition house goal might state "we are working towards the elimination of wife battering by providing shelter for battered women." The goals of an educational women's group might be "we are trying to change attitudes towards women and women's issues by providing education on these issues." A lobby group goal might be to "develop a way for women to be heard in the lobbying process."

OBJECTIVES

Objectives are specific, measurable statements of what you, your group or project want to accomplish by a given point in time. This is where you can finally describe the nitty gritty of what you want to do. Objectives should *not* be general statements. They must be as specific as possible. For example, a transition house might have several objectives, the first of which might be to provide safe and useful shelter to a battered woman and her children for a maximum of a 30 day stay. An educational women's group may have an objective that states "we will offer two workshops on two important women's issues in our community between September and November." A lobby group might decide that one of their objectives is "in the next two months to train an ad hoc lobby team from our community."

Objectives are usually directed to changing the knowledge, skill, attitudes or practices of people, or they may aim at maintaining or changing a condition of the community or organization. You should try to make your objectives time limited if possible—this helps to keep your work realistic!

You should also avoid writing two objectives in one—keep them separate and then the work you undertake to meet your objectives can be efficiently planned. For example, a "two in one" objective using the last example given above, could read "to train an ad hoc lobby team from our community that can monitor the legislative proceedings during the next legislative session." Those are two jobs, or two end results in that one objective—they must be written separately. The great value in being strict and specific with objective writing is that it forces you to be exact about what you want and need to do. It encourages you to avoid taking on unfocussed work.

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW SKILLS—FOR OPEN-ENDED INTERVIEWS

1 a The Interview Guide should follow a process to help the woman to get a perspective, to see patterns in her life/situation; to help her to *not* blame herself.

b *Introduce* project—self. Perhaps use a handout explaining the project as a basis for introduction. Allow questions about this. Mention confidentiality.

c At the beginning, tell the woman you're interviewing briefly what kinds of things you'll cover in the interview.

2 a The interview is a conversation so relate to the woman. . . listen carefully. Go where she leads but be disciplined so you don't go off on tangents.

b If the woman seems uncomfortable, try to discover the sources of discomfort. Is it your manner? Misunderstanding of the project? Perhaps she doesn't feel that what she wants to say is acceptable? *There are no right or wrong statements.* We are asking them for help in learning about their experiences, to help other women.

3 Be "natural" about agreeing and disagreeing. Arguing will cause people to keep quiet—too much "neutrality" might cause people to say what they think you want to hear. One can always "agree" first with what they might say, then pose alternate questions if one wishes.

4 It's important that the woman focuses on herself. Many women haven't been asked before about themselves; they're not used to this procedure; and so they talk about everyone else (their husband or children, etc.) but themselves. Interjecting "how did *you* feel about that?," "what did *you* do?" will usually help to bring her back on topic.

5 Draw out information by further questions, asking for clarification etc. Use your own knowledge to help her with a question; e.g. "Some women say. . . ," "Some women have experienced. . . "

6 Don't worry about silences. Wait for the woman to decide what she wants to say. Often what comes after a silence is very significant. (This could be recorded in your notes.)

7 Interview the woman alone—i.e. without kids (or husband) around, if possible.

8 If the woman does not want to talk about a certain area, don't push it but try to find out why and make a note of it.

9 Write down the *woman's actual words* as much as possible. Writing in the first person helps ("I" not "she"). If you're having trouble keeping up with what the woman is saying, tell her that and explain you want to be accurate about what she says so you'll ask her to slow down, if necessary. If you still feel you're missing some things she says, leave a space at these points in your notes and write a brief reminder for yourself so you can go back later and fill in the spaces with what you do remember she said.

10 Focus on a description rather than problems. The interview is a way for her to tell her story, i.e. we're not looking for deviance or to prove or disprove our personal or popular theories.

11 Writing up the interview is preferable to taping it because of problems with transcribing from tapes. In addition, the process of writing encourages the interviewer to pay close attention to what is actually being said, disciplines the interviewer from going off on tangents and shows respect for what the woman is actually saying. Rely on your head—train your memory.

12 At the close of the interview, ask if she feels OK (interviews are sometimes upsetting). Tell the woman to get in touch with you if she thinks of anything else she wants to add or if she just wants to talk.

13 Write up your notes the same day, as soon as possible after the interview. If you aren't typing, write clearly and use ink that will reproduce through a copy machine.

14 Get names and addresses for thank-you letters. Don't forget to code your informant.

APPENDIX 3

PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR AN EVALUATION COMMITTEE

1 To raise and discuss any and all matters regarding the design and use of evaluative instruments for project work.

2 To monitor the overall evaluation process and modify as necessary.

3 To review data and findings arising from evaluative work; to analyse and discuss implications of this material in terms of project work.

4 To be the "official" information link between group (Board, staff, workers, group leaders, etc.) and evaluator(s).

5 A meeting of the evaluation committee will be held each month at a mutually agreed, pre-arranged time—with additional or special meetings to be arranged as circumstances require.

6 The evaluation committee will consist of . . .

APPENDIX 4

EXAMPLE OF AN EVALUATION FORM FOR AN EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOP

Participant Evaluation

The purpose of this workshop was to provide participants with an overview of the short and long term consequences of childhood sexual abuse from the survivor's perspective.
The major learning objective was for participants to be able to identify specific strategies which will assist adult survivors in understanding the ramifications of the abusive experience(s).

1 Please indicate the degree to which the purpose and learning objective were met for you:

	not met		somewhat met		completely met
PURPOSE	1	2	3	4	5
LEARNING OBJECTIVE	1	2	3	4	5

2 How relevant was the workshop material to your daily work?

not very		quite relevant		very relevant
1	2	3	4	5

3 Feel free to state in what ways you found the workshop content useful or not useful.

4 What were the major strengths of this workshop for you?

5 What were the major weaknesses of this workshop for you?

6 Do you have any comments regarding the role and effectiveness of the workshop resource people?

7 Overall, how useful was this workshop to you?

not very		somewhat		very
1	2	3	4	5

8 Any other comments?

APPENDIX 5

EXAMPLE OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Profile sheet for participants in adult survivor's groups

The information we are asking for on this sheet will be kept *confidential*. It is information that we need to help us know who we are working for/with and what some of the circumstances of sexual abuse are. We will use it in planning and developing for better services and groups for the future.
N.B. Please use the space provided after some of the questions (or use the back of this sheet) to make any additional comments. Thank you.

Today's date: _____

Your age: _____ Marital status: _____

1 If you have children please state the age and sex of each child:

_____

2 If you have sisters or brothers, please give the age and sex of each:

_____

_____

3 What was your reason for coming to this group?: _____

_____

4 How did you find this organization?: _____

_____

5 Have you been to previous groups offered by this organization?:

Yes: _____ No: _____

If yes, what kind of group?: _____

When was it held?: _____

6 Have you been to groups offered by another organization?
Yes: _____ No: _____

Which organization? _____

When?: _____

7 Have you had any other kind of counselling?: _____

Explain briefly: _____

_____

8 How old were you when the abuse began?: _____

9 How long did the abuse last?: _____

10 Is the offender male? _____ female? _____

11 Age of offender when the abuse began: _____

12 What is/was the offenders' relationship to you (e.g. neighbour, father, brother, etc.)?: _____

13 What contact do you have *now* with the offender?: _____

_____

14 Please describe the abuse, briefly (i.e. what happened; what did the offender do to you): _____

_____

_____

15 Where and when did it usually happen?: _____

_____

16 Who did you *first* tell about the abuse?: _____

What happened as a result?: _____

17 Who, if anyone, reported the abuse to the justice system?: _____

_____

What happened?: _____

18 Who, if anyone, reported the abuse to the social service system? _____

_____

What happened?: _____

19 Have you experienced any other kind of abuse (in addition to sexual abuse)—e.g. battered by husband? by father?: _____

By whom?: _____

When?: _____

Describe, briefly:_____

20 Have any other members of your family (brothers, sisters, etc.) been abused?: _____

21 By the same person who abused you?: _____

If not, by whom?: _____

APPENDIX 6

EXAMPLE OF INTERVIEW GUIDE OR SCHEDULE

Interview schedule for post group review of support groups by group leaders

1 *Background info on the group*

a How many women were there at the beginning; how many joined in progress; how many were there present at the end?

b What reasons did the women who dropped out give for doing so? (and what is your take on that?)

c Where did the women come from—how were they referred or how did they find out about the group?

2 *Objectives*

a What were your objectives/purposes for this group? (written or verbal)

b What did you plan to accomplish with this group (be specific) and/or, what did you not want to do?

c How did you structure and operate/run the group to accomplish your objectives?

d How did you handle leading the group as co-leaders?

3 *Women in the group*

a What issues did women raise in the group?

b What did women want from the group?

c What difficulties did women encounter in coming to the group?

d Were there any process problems in the group? Describe.

e How did leading the group affect you, the leaders?

4 *Contact with participants outside the group*

a What kind of informal (between sessions) contacts did you have with the participants?

b How were these set up . . . how did they happen?

c What were the results of this contact?

d How time-consuming was it?

5 *Effectiveness of methods used in group*

a What was the most effective part of your work with this group? Why? (accomplishments, exercises, teaching—be specific)

b What was the least effective part? Why?

c How did the group meet the objectives set out for it?

6 *What did you learn from doing this group about . . . ?*

   a Group process?

   b Sexual abuse?

   c Counselling skills?

   d Co-leading?

   e Adult survivors . . . Mothers?

7 *Anything else you want to add?*

Note to interviewer: Be sure you have collected the profile and evaluation sheets for whatever group you are interviewing for and file them with the write-up of this interview.

APPENDIX 7

EXAMPLE OF INTERVIEW GUIDE OR SCHEDULE

Interview schedule for residents

1 What's it like living at the transition house?

- (expand: what's an average day; what were you expecting when you came; what's good/bad about being here; . . .)

2 Re: family background:

- why they got married; when; what she expected of marriage; had she lived on her own before marriage (relationship); religion (woman's and man's); . . .

3 Circumstances of the beatings/abuse:

- when did they/it start; under what sorts of circumstances; frequency; what he said/accused her of as a reason for the beatings/abuse (effects of pregnancy, alcohol, jealousy, not allowing her to have friends, etc.)
- kinds of abuse— physical, psychological, threats against her, forced sexual activity . . .
- did his violence go beyond her — to the child(ren), sexually, outside the home . . .

4 How did she leave/what made it possible for her to leave?

- when (i.e. to transition house); circumstances; had she left before; had she tried to get help before (specify); who was helpful (social worker, friend(s), family, doctor, transition house worker(s), clergy . . .); is relationship over; is he trying to contact her or is she thinking of going back or is he harassing her; arrangements re: visitation rights of child(ren); money . . .

5 What are her feelings now?

- since being at transition house
- needs that are or are not being met

6 What is she worried about/afraid of?

7 What would she like her life to be like 3 months from now?

- where to live, employment, courses, etc. for her and for child(ren)

(Women's Research Centre, "Battered and Blamed" report)

APPENDIX 8

EXAMPLE OF FACE SHEET

(this sheet can be used to collect numerical information along with aide-memoire, interview schedule, or questionnaire)

Code Name _____

Interviewer _____

Code _____ Address _____
Date _____

Place of interview _____

Time—Start _____ Finish _____

Number of Contacts—

Phone _____

Letter _____

Other _____

Relationship to Interviewer _____

Why Chosen _____

How Long at this Address _____

How Long in Town _____ How Long in Area _____

Family/Household Make-Up _____

Heard About Project From _____

Interest in Project _____

Comments _____

Age Group 16–24, 25–34, 35–44, 45–64, senior citizen

Education _____

Family Income 5000–10000, 10000–15000, 15000–20000, over 20000

Children's age group—pre school, elementary, high school, left home

(Women's Research Centre, "Beyond the Pipeline" report)

APPENDIX 9

EXAMPLE OF AGENDA FOR A SELF-EVALUATION MEETING

10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (assuming about 10 participants)

N.B. - Times are flexible and will vary according to several factors: e.g., how long the group has been together; whether objectives are already clear and stated somewhere in writing; how many participants, etc.

Before the meeting:

- agree on topic for evaluation—i.e all of the groups' work; only one project...
- select recorder
- select facilitator
- get flip chart
- arrange for lunch and coffee, juice, etc.

10:00 - 10:15 1. Introduction of participants. Brief review of function of recorder and facilitator and ground rules, i.e. *rounds* or *brainstorming* format but everyone should get a chance to speak, etc.

10:15 - 10:45 2. History of group

10:45 - 11:30 3. Objectives

11:30 - 12:00 4. Context

12:00 - 1:00 LUNCH

1:00 - 2:00 5. Discussion of work

2:00 - 2:30 6. External Relations

2:30 - 2:45 BREAK

3:30 - 4:15 7. Accomplishments

4:15 - 5:00 8. Implications for future work

APPENDIX 10

EXAMPLE OF AIDE MEMOIRE

Interviewers: please cover *all* the following topics in your interview with informants. Please try to gather informants' *thoughts, knowledge, and experience* of the following key issues in their community and *how (if) they think the pipeline development will affect each.*

Topics:

Housing
Employment
Education
Health Services
Transportation
Shopping
Recreation
Social services
Child care
Crime
Community

(Women's Research Centre, "Beyond the Pipeline" report)

APPENDIX II

EXAMPLE OF AIDE MEMOIRE

Introduction

"We'd like to understand how the recession and cutbacks have affected various aspects of the life and work of yourself and your family, both in and out of the home. In each of the topic areas we will raise, we will ask you to first of all describe what it is that you (or others in your family) actually *do*, then we will ask you to describe if and how that has changed because of the recession, and/or specific provincial or federal government cutbacks."

1 Work outside the home

   a Your work outside the home (what do you do, impact of recession, impact of cutbacks)

   b Your volunteer work outside the home

   c Partner's work outside the home

   d Partner's volunteer work outside the home

   e Children's paid work outside the home (if applicable)

   f Children's volunteer work outside the home

2 Work in the home

   a Your work in the home (what do you do, impact of recession, impact of cutbacks)

   b Partner's work in the home

   c Children's work in the home

3 Relationship with community

   a Your use of/involvement in community (describe what it is, impact of recession, impact of cutbacks)

   b Partner's use of community

   c Children's use of community

4 How would you describe the impact of recession on your community generally?

5 How would you describe the impact of cutbacks on your community generally?

6 Some people think that the recession such as we are experiencing has a negative effect on people's emotions and sense of self—how do you feel about that?

7 Can you describe what, if any, impact the recession has had on your relationship with your partner?

8 Can you describe what, if any, impact the recession has had on your relationship with your children?

9 What impact has the recession had on your use of the following services: health, MHR, daycare, emergency shelter, education, recreation, transportation, housing, others.

10 What impact have provincial or federal cutbacks had on your use of those services?

11 How do you think things could be different for women and families in terms of the economy and economic development for women? (probe: what do you think "an economy that took women into consideration" might look like?)

(Women's Research Centre, Women and the Economy project)

APPENDIX 12

GUIDELINES FOR DATA ANALYSIS

1 Be sure to code or number each piece of data (evaluation form, questionnaire, etc.) so you will be able to trace who said what. All original data should be copied and the originals filed. Work with the copies.

2 READ THE DATA. Look for patterns in the responses. Make notes on what you see. Use your intuition at this stage. Note the comments on file cards or one large sheet of paper for each question/issue/topic. This will allow you to see more readily the emerging patterns. Underlining or circling key words, perhaps in coloured ink, may be helpful.

3 A useful step in analysing interviews is to *first of all photo copy your data*, then cut it up into the separate theme or question areas. Then you can easily look at all the responses to one question and begin to more effectively note recurrent patterns of response by sorting them.

4 *Key word analysis* is a method you may choose to track recurring words or descriptions. You start by going through the data, beginning, for example, with all the responses to one question, and listing all the different or repetitive words or descriptions that *mean the same thing*. This begins to give you an overall picture you can conceptualize and talk about.

For example: In response to a question regarding women's use of their community during a recent economic recession, the following phrases were pulled out of the interviews using key word analysis:

- "don't get involved"
- "tend to withdraw when I'm unemployed"
- "less involvement"
- "we don't put down roots here"
- "haven't been able to do anything"
- "friends constantly leaving"
- "have made more commitment because of recession"
- "careful when I pick up welfare, don't want anyone to know"

From this key word analysis we can see a picture and begin to state it like this:
"In response to a question regarding how women use their community during a recession, the majority stated they used it less. Women described feeling less involved, or wanting to withdraw due to unemployment or being on welfare. One woman, however, felt she had made more commitment to her community and was making a point of shopping at local small businesses and helping with the development of local support for unemployed." etc.

5 Use exact quotes in your notes. This will help to ensure that you don't misinterpret responses or that if you do you will be able to catch the mistake.

6 Too much detail is better than not enough. It is always easier to cut down than it is to add information later.

7 The business of analysing data is time-consuming but rewarding. You will feel confident about what you've done if you do it thoroughly.

8 Significant results or outcomes always need to be discussed between the group and the evaluator. There should be agreement on significant outcomes, or the group and the evaluator must be clear about disagreements and declare them, in the report itself if necssary.

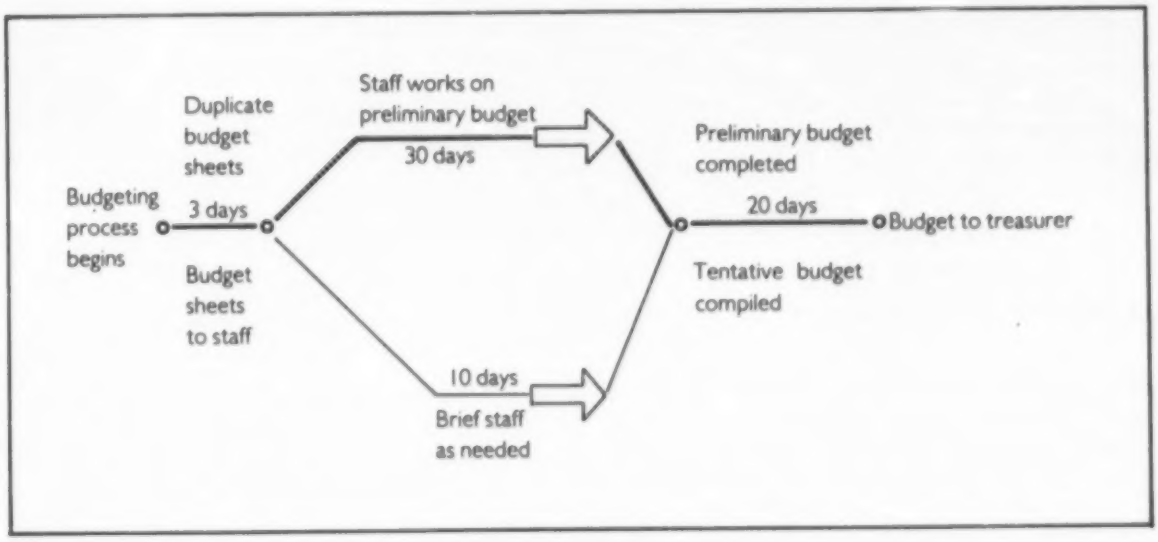
9 Do whatever counting your data allows to aid in the analysis. For example, an evaluation form may have a series of "yes", "no", "maybe" answers and it is easy to count the responses people checked off.

APPENDIX 13

PERT CHART (Program Evaluation and Review Technique)

(Excerpt from: Craig, Dorothy. *Hip Pocket Guide to Planning and Evaluation*, 1978).

PERT-charting is a sophisticated time-planning technique. This technique is used when it is necessary for many tasks to be accomplished in sequence and in the shortest possible time. It is a technique well-suited to group planning, where cooperation is essential to get many tasks done by a given deadline.



The PERT chart identifies *activities*, which culminate in *events*. Working backward from the final deadline, the time needed for each activity is calculated, and deadlines are scheduled for each event. By showing activities that can occur simultaneously and those that must occur in sequence, the chart reveals a *critical path*, which is the overall time needed to complete the project. An advantage of PERT is that it helps the group members focus their energies on critical tasks and continually re-evaluate the process to see if they are on schedule.

A simple PERT chart is illustrated above, with the critical path shown as a heavy line.

In a large group, illustrate the PERT technique using the steps suggested below. This is a difficult technique to learn, but it can be very rewarding to master it. It's worth spending some extra time with it.

a Have the group select a strategy that they've become familiar with. Write down on newsprint all the activities people can think of that should be done to accomplish the strategy. (To save time, you may want to do this much before the workshop.)

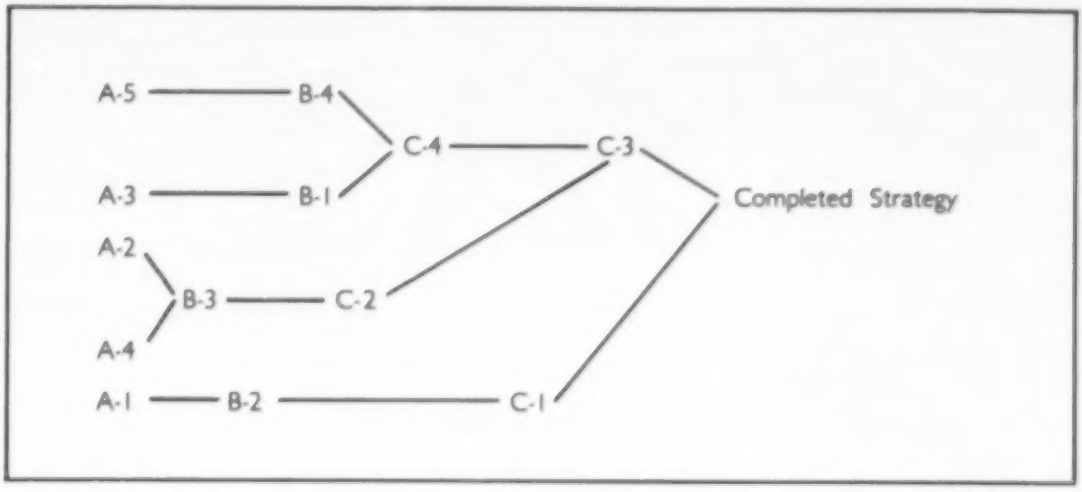
b Have participants add other activities that might be needed and put them on the newsprint also. If the list is too long, you may want to simplify the illustration by reducing the list to the ten key activities that need to be done.

c Put an A beside those activities that need to occur early in the process, a B beside those that occur in the middle, and C beside those that occur just before completion of the strategy.

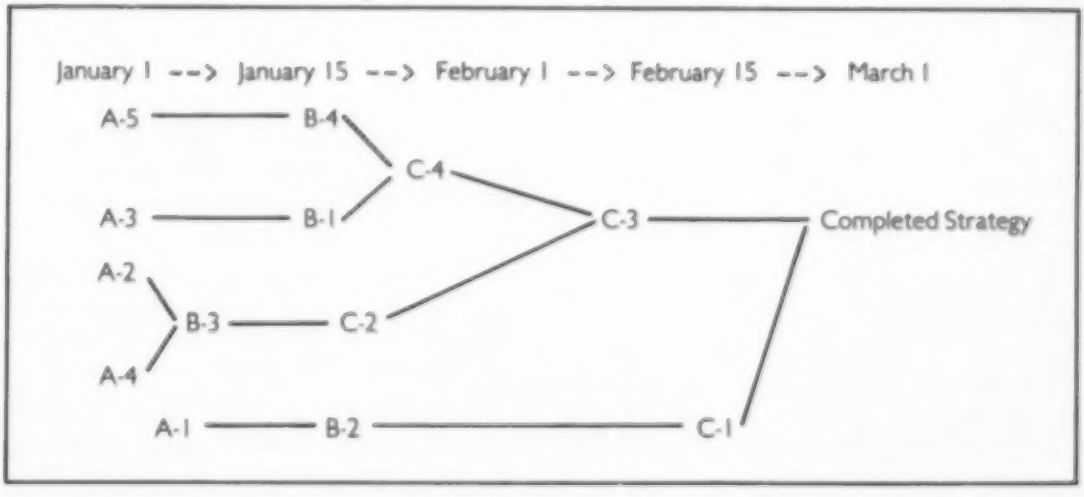
d Now list all the A's in a column on the left of a horizontal strip of newsprint, B's in the middle, and C's on the right:

A's	B's	C's
A-1	B-1	C-1
A-2	B-2	C-2
A-3	B-3	C-3
A-4	B-4	C-4
A-5		

e On another piece of newsprint, begin to show how activities are related in time sequence and function. Pick the C that occurs closest to the completion of the project. See which other C's must be done just before it can be completed. Now work backward to establish a chain of the B's required, tied to each of the C's. Then, link up the first B to the A that is the last one required before the first B. If some C's are not picked up in the first pass, go back and do the same process again; for example, C-1 in the example below.



f When this rough chart is completed, talk about estimates of time required for each event to occur in terms of person-hours or working days. Then draw another more refined chart, with lines between activities reflecting the amount of time required. Finally, make the timeline realistic by adding calendar periods of time for actual deadlines.



APPENDIX 14

DEFINING TERMS

In the text of the Evaluation Guide we've tried to explain the various terms we use in talking about evaluation methods. However, for easy reference, we offer the following list of terms and phrases defined, for the most part, according to how we've used them in the Guide.

evaluation—a process of making an appraisal or assessment.

assessment—an estimation of the quality, magnitude, or features of a problem or situation.

judgement—an estimate according to some standard; usually by taking a reading of a specific situation at one point in time and comparing it to information on the situation at a later date.

comparison—a process of looking for the similarities and differences in situations, pieces of work, events, etc. Comparison requires that, for example, the pieces of work to be compared are similar to start with (i.e. it makes sense to compare 2 workshops on the same or a similar topic rather than comparing workshops with, for example, writing a brief); that the same kind of information can be collected on each piece of work to be compared; and, therefore, that the pieces of work can be compared on the same basis.

goals—*general* statements of what an organization, project, etc. is trying to accomplish.

objectives—*specific* measurable statements of what an organization, project, etc. wants to accomplish by a given point in time.

qualitative approach—involves the collection of data or information (by means of open-ended interviews, participant observation, etc.) which will provide a description of the circumstances and conditions of the situation, work, event, problem for the purpose of making an assessment.

quantitative approach—involves the collection of data or information (by means of questionnaires, structured interviews, or counting) which will provide an account of the magnitude of the situation, work, event, problem based on numbers or statistics.

statistics/statistical data—information derived by counting the number of similar answers to the same question, the number of people holding similar views, having similar problems, participating in an event or action, etc.

subjective approach—an approach which values the perspective, views, and experience of the participants and actors involved in a situation, event, organization, project, etc. as the primary basis for making an assessment or judgement.

objective approach—an approach which values the perspective, views, opinions of those outside of or distanced from the situation, event, organization, project, etc. as the primary basis for making an assessment or judgement.

summative or outcome evaluation—evaluation methods which emphasize or focus on the final product or results of the initiative or work of a group or project and which most often use quantitative measures primarily. (Definition derived from "The Purpose of Evaluation and the Role of the Evaluator . . . ," George H. Johnson, 1970, p. 19.)

process or formative evaluation—an ongoing dynamic process where information is added continuously (using, primarily, a qualitative approach), organized systematically and

analysed periodically during the evaluation period. (Definition derived from "Evaluating Social Development Programs," Ottawa, Council on Social Development, 1973, p. 33.)

systematic—methodical, according to a plan, regular not casual or unintentional or sporadic.

standardized—conforming to a standard or measure or design.

participant focussed evaluation—an approach which uses primarily qualitative measurements and values the perspective and interests of the participants involved in the group/project to be evaluated as the basis for an evaluation of how well the group/project is meeting its own goals and objectives.